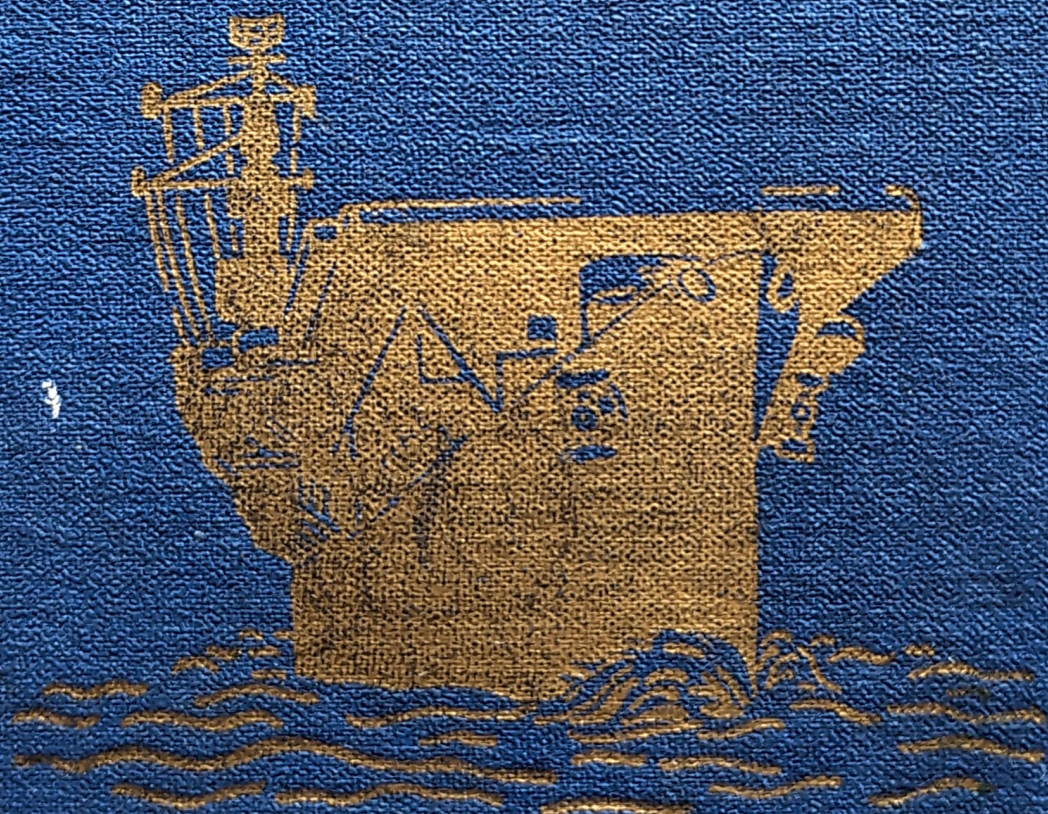
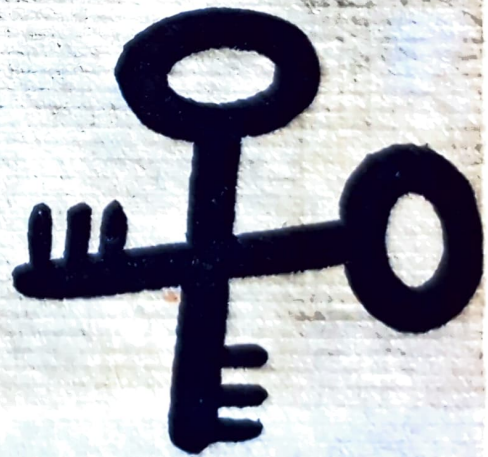
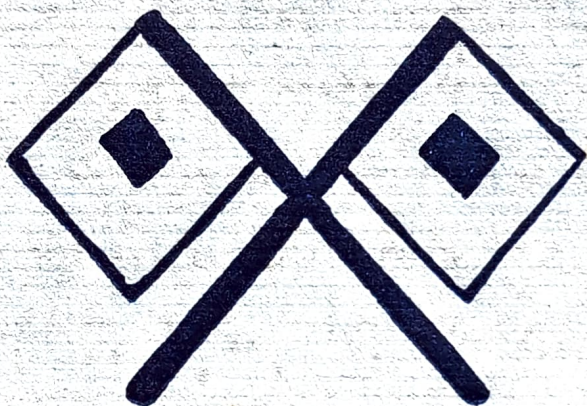


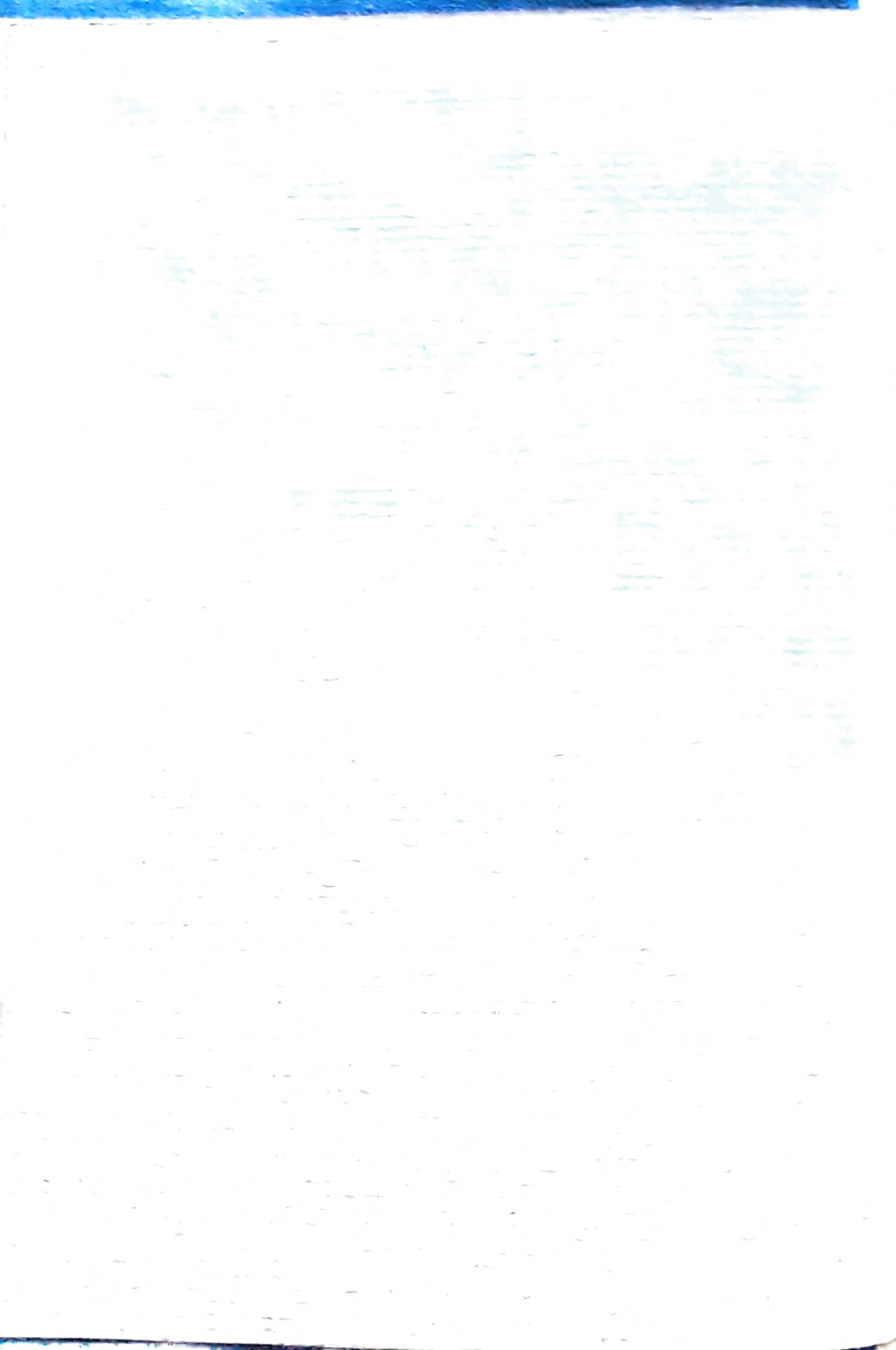
Thoughts FROM THE SEA



L.T. JOHN W. ALEXANDER, USNR







Stephen Johnston

Thoughts From the Sea



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Thoughts From the Sea

by

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by
Ernest Keasling
Winona Lake, Indiana

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DEDICATION

To My Father and Mother
who trained me for this life's cruise,
established the happiest home port a boy could
possibly have,
directed me in selecting my life's goal and port of
destination,
acquainted me with the best possible chart to
go by,
helped me in plotting my course, and above all
introduced me to the Great Captain,
this book is affectionately dedicated.

INTRODUCTION

This book is not a continuous story. It is simply a series of miscellaneous messages which came to the author in connection with numerous experiences during his four years of naval service.* Lieutenant Alexander as a boy was convinced that the best way of life is that which is built upon the teachings of Jesus Christ, the life lived in response to Christ's challenge, "Follow Me." It was only natural that in his naval career his experiences should cause him to notice many analogies between Navy life and the Christian life. In this little book he recounts those experiences and the thoughts which they provoked in his mind.

ERNEST KEASLING

* This service was spent on the following assignments:

Naval Training Station, Fort Schuyler, New York
Marine Ordnance School, Quantico, Virginia
Anti-aircraft Training Center, San Diego, California
Navy Section Base, Port Angeles, Washington
Naval Operating Base, Dutch Harbor, Alaska
Navy Section Base, Savannah, Georgia
U.S.S. BELLEAU WOOD, CVL-24

FOREWORD

There are many elements of character required of those who go to sea that are valuable anywhere. The discipline of the sea, the consideration for others required aboard ship, the preparation necessary to take care of unforeseen emergencies, fidelity to duty, perseverance, and sacrifice are qualities that are essential for the best living, whether one goes to sea or lives ashore. I am glad to add a foreword to this book in the hope that its lessons drawn from the sea may bring success and happiness to its readers.

W. N. THOMAS
Rear Admiral, ChC, USN
Chief of Chaplains

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I Will Follow

"Raise your right hand and repeat after me"

The atmosphere was tense as the recruiting officer prepared to "swear in" a number of young volunteers who were ready to take their oath of allegiance and commitment to the naval service of their country.

"I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic"

Their country needed them, and they heard the call. With no mental reservations or purpose of evasion, with no choice of where they would go or the type of duty they would perform, with an acceptance of orders to go anywhere and do anything for their country—they answered the call.

Today as seldom before the cause of Christ needs men who will follow; men who will dedicate their lives to Him; men who will hear and answer His call. He wants men who will answer with no mental reservation or purpose of evasion, leaving the choice of where and how

they will serve to God; men who will do anything for Christ.

*"I heard Him call,
'Come, follow,' that was all.
My gold grew dim;
My soul went after Him;
I rose and followed.
That was all.
Who would not follow
If he heard Him call!"*

I Know Not What the Future Hath

It was a Sunday evening in 1942, my last night as a civilian before departing the following morning for New York, where I was to report for active duty in the Navy. I was in church that Sunday evening, attending worship in Washington, D. C. The pastor, out of personal consideration for me, invited the attention of the congregation to John Greenleaf Whittier's choice hymn,

*"I bow my forehead to the dust;
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.
No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love."*

That first verse is appropriate for any Christian to sing at any time regardless of where he is. But it was the last two verses which were especially significant to one who was headed for naval service:

*"I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies;
And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.*

*"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care;
And Thou, O Lord, by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Help me still closer now to lean
My human heart on Thee."*

Appropriate, I thought, for a young man entering the Navy.

A few months later I had completed my preliminary training and was finishing up at a gunnery school on the west coast when I received orders to "shove off" for duty in the Pacific. Again the words of that hymn became pregnant with meaning: "I know not what the future hath"

Many months later as our ship lay at anchor

in Eniwetok, I went ashore with the liberty party to swim and then stretch on the warm coral sands of that tropical beach. I gazed up at the palm trees gently waving across the deep blue sky, and thought, "I know not where His islands lift their fronded palms in air"

On the black, cold, stormy night of February 15, 1945, Task Force 58 was driving north toward Tokyo. It was the deepest penetration our surface ships had ever made into enemy waters. The following morning would find us only a few score miles off Japan's shores for the Navy's first strike at the Japanese homeland. It was a crucial time. We had no idea what was ahead of us. And again these words came to mind, "I know not what the future hath"

Questions and doubts, fears and discouragements, reverses and rebuffs, suffering—yes, even death—may come to us, but we need not fear because the future holds no terror for a faith which can say,

*"I know not what the future hath
I only know I cannot drift beyond His
love and care."*

This Year Is Your Ship

God built and launched this year for you;
Upon the bridge you stand;
It is your ship, aye, your own ship,
And you are in command.

Just what the twelve months' trip will do
Rests wholly, solely, friend, with you!

Your log book, kept from day to day—
My friend, what will it show?
Have you on your appointed way
Made progress—yes or no?
The log will tell, like guiding star,
The sort of captain that you are.

Contrary winds may oft beset,
Mountainous seas may press,
Fierce storms prevail and false lights lure,
You e'en may know real stress.
Yet does God's hand steady the helm,
There's naught can e'er your ship o'erwhelm.

For weal or woe, this year is yours,
Your ship is on life's sea,
Your acts, as captain, must decide
Whichever it shall be;
So now in starting on your trip,
Ask God to help you sail your ship.

—Selected

Navy Regs

It didn't take the Navy long to develop an intensive training program for transforming us civilians into bluejackets and officers. From civilian life we entered into a program which was stiff and strenuous. Into a brief period were concentrated several courses of instruction designed to acquaint us with the Navy; some of the courses were seamanship, gunnery, drill, navigation, and "Navy Regs."

The complete accumulation of rules and regulations for governing the Navy are published in a thick volume entitled "Navy Regulations," dubbed "Navy Regs" for short. This is a ponderous volume containing the rules which apply to operation of the Navy. The regulations are complete and cover many minute questions. This literature is very dry reading for the most part and is much less interesting than the rules and regulations in the book of Leviticus. It was important that we beginners learn something of the rules and regulations for the Navy. To this end we were given a course in "Navy Regs." None were allowed to remain ignorant of how the Navy was organized, what men were in

control, how the organization functioned, and what each man's duty was.

As a Christian you are a member of a large and important organization—the Christian church. You probably belong to a particular unit or denomination of the general church, but have you ever done any studying to acquaint yourself with the rules and regulations for Christian living? Do you know what the fundamental standards of the church are? How is your particular unit organized? Who are its leaders? What kind of missionary program does your church sponsor? Where are your mission fields? Can you name your missionaries? What does your church stand for?

Most Christians are ignorant of important church facts. Our churches need some kind of indoctrination course for orienting their members—similar to the Navy's course in "Navy Regs" so that every member will know what the church is, what it has stood for through the centuries, and what his particular duty in the church is.

Port of Destination

A ship is steaming out through Golden Gate and into the vast Pacific. That ship is free to set its course for any port on the face of the earth. It isn't like a train which can go nowhere except where the previously established tracks lead. A train's journey is determined by an external force—the tracks. A ship at sea, however, can go in any direction—a decision on the bridge, a turn of the wheel, a movement of the rudder, and the vessel is on a new course.

Where a ship finally arrives depends on the positioning of her rudder and the course she steers. In the middle of the Pacific she can set her course for China, the Americas, Australia, Europe or Africa. Her port of destination is determined by her own choice and movement.

Your life is a long cruise. Your port of destination is of your own choice. You yourself select your life purpose, your "philosophy of life," and the goal which you wish to reach.

If you have not done so, will you select God's will for your purpose, steer His course for your life, and finally arrive at the port of Heaven?

The Lord is my Pilot; I shall not drift.
He lighteth me across the dark waters;
He steereth me in the deep channels;
He keepeth my log.
He guideth me by the star of holiness for His
name's sake.
Yea, though I sail 'mid the thunders and
tempests of life,
I shall dread no danger; for Thou art near me.
Thou preparest a harbor before me in the
homeland of eternity,
Thou anointest the waves with oil,
My ship rideth calmly.
Surely sunlight and starlight shall favor me
on the voyage I take,
And I will rest in the port of my God forever.

—Capt. J. Rogers,
U. S. Merchant Marine, in Reveille

"I've Got My Chart"

A cruise at sea is determined by several things, two of which are selection of port of destination, and a chart to go by. A chart is to a ship what a road map is to a car. With it one figures out the course to steer for reaching his destination.

On a ship the charts are kept in a chartroom where they are available for study and reference. Other equipment, such as dividers, mathematical tables, and measuring scales are in the room, for computations regarding the chart. Usually the chartroom is some distance from the bridge where there isn't room for computations and study. But on the bridge there is always a chart handy for quick consulting by the skipper, officer of the deck, or navigator.

Assuming that our lives are ocean cruises and that Heaven, our eternal home, is our destination, we have as our chart the Scriptures, which indicate the courses for us to steer. In our homes we have a chartroom where the Bible, reference books, and commentaries are accessible for study. But on our "bridge" we should have a handy copy of the chart available for immediate con-

sultation. To this end we can carry a New Testament in a vest pocket, shirt, or pocket-book. This will help at school, the office, the factory, the field—it will help us individually and also improve our witness if we have a copy at hand.

I once talked about this to a group of juniors in a church. The next day I noticed one of the boys pedaling along on his bike, carrying a tennis racket on his way to the courts. When he observed me he turned my way, slowed up, flashed a smile, dug into his pocket to extract a Testament, and said, "I've got my chart!"

If this is not your practice, why not get a pocket Testament *today* and carry it with you?

*We sail along toward the harbor light,
Over the great life sea;
The breakers roar and the waves dash high;
Who will our pilot be?
The Christ will our Pilot be;
A wonderful Guide is He.
So we'll sail, sail, sail;
Christ will our pilot be.*

—Lizzie DeArmond

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"I Need a Chart"

Early one densely foggy morning in the summer of 1943 a United States Navy minesweeper was steaming slowly through Juan de Fuca Strait, groping her way from the open Pacific to Puget Sound. On approaching the Navy Section Base at Port Angeles, Washington, she called and sent this message, "I need a chart." The men at the Section Base quickly procured a chart of the Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound area and gave directions to the minesweeper to tie up at the Base. Through the fog the ship crept deliberately, entered the harbor, and successfully made the dock. The chart was sent down to the ship and delivered to the skipper who, with this newly acquired guide, could confidently make his way on through the channels which led to Seattle and Bremerton. On a clear day he could have seen far enough ahead to navigate that route successfully without a chart if it had been necessary for him to be without one. But on this particular morning the fog rolled in, and he needed some help.

As each one of us navigates his craft toward

life's port of destination, he may think he can successfully arrive by capriciously picking his course with no outside guidance. By this method he may possibly steam for a long time without encountering difficulty. But there comes a time when the fogs of doubt, confusion, and discouragement roll in—when one cannot see and is at a loss to know where to go or what to do. At such a time he needs a chart. Fortunately, a Chart of Life is available. I've found it in God's Word, which clearly shows the port of destination and indicates the courses for steering to reach it; it charts the worthwhile goals in life, and indicates the things one should do to reach those goals. I have found this chart infallible, and recommend it to any human craft which might "need a chart."

*Almighty Father, hear our cry
As o'er the trackless deep we roam.
Be Thou our haven always nigh,
On homeless waters, Thou our home.*

*Great God of our salvation, Thee
We love, we worship, we adore;
Our refuge on time's changeful sea,
Our joy on heaven's eternal shore.*

—E. H. Bickersteth

Your Commitment

In 1942 I entered the Navy. I wanted to get into navigation, but was shunted into gunnery. I wanted duty in the Atlantic, but was sent to the Pacific. I desired sea duty, but was ordered to shore duty in the Aleutians. Other than that I got things about as I wished.

The Navy never promised us we could do what we wanted to do and go where we wanted to go. It had a job to perform and told us what to do to get that job done. We took orders from the Navy instead of giving them.

Christ called men to follow Him, to deny themselves, assume their responsibilities, and execute His orders. If Christians would follow Him as we in the Navy obeyed our superiors, if the commitment of Christians were as thorough as our commitment, if Christians were as loyal in doing anything and going anywhere for Christ as we were for the Navy, Christ would not be an "unknown" to so many millions.

The Christian church in America is stumbling and limping along because of an apathetic *discipline* among most of the membership.

How thorough is your commitment?

Upon life's boundless ocean where mighty billows
roll,

I've fix'd my hope in Jesus, blest anchor of the
soul.

When trials fierce assail me as storms are gath'ring
o'er,

I rest upon His mercy and trust Him more.

He is my Friend and Saviour, in Him my anchor's
cast;

He drives away my sorrows and shields me from
the blast.

By faith I'm looking upward beyond life's
troubled sea;

There I behold a haven prepared for me.

I've anchored in Jesus, the storms of life I'll brave;

I've anchored in Jesus, I fear no wind or wave;

I've anchored in Jesus, for He hath pow'r to save;

I've anchored to the Rock of Ages.

—L. E. Jones

*I owned a little boat a while ago,
And sailed a morning sea without a fear.
And whither any breeze might fairly blow
I'd steer the little craft afar or near.*

*Mine was the boat and mine the air,
And mine the sea, not mine, a care.*

*My boat became my place of nightly toil,
I sailed at sunset to the fishing ground,
At morn the boat was freighted with the spoil,
That all my conquering work and skill had
found.*

*Mine was the boat, and mine the net,
And mine the skill and power to get.*

*One day there passed along the silent shore,
While I my net was casting in the sea,
A man who spoke as never man before;
I followed him—new life began in me.*

*Mine was the boat, but His the voice,
And His the call, yet mine the choice.*

Ah, 'twas a fearful night out on the lake,
And all my skill availed not at the helm,
Till Him, asleep, I wakened, crying, "Take,
Take thou command, lest waters overwhelm!"

His was the boat, and His the sea,
And His the peace o'er all and me.

Once from His boat He taught the curious throng,
Then bade me let down nets into the sea;
I murmured, but obeyed, nor was it long
Before the catch amazed and humbled me.

His was the boat, His the skill,
And His the catch, and His my will.

—George MacDonald

Read Matthew 4:18-22.

A Compass to Steer By

The cold wind blew briskly under a dark gray sky, whipping up frothing waves on the gray waters of the Gulf of Alaska. Our transport pitched and tossed as she ploughed steadily ahead toward the Aleutian Islands. The sun had not shone for a single moment on the entire trip, and visibility was extremely limited. As the storm clouds closed in, one could easily imagine that just beyond the haze loomed all kinds of rocky cliffs waiting for us to crash upon them. And then one morning we noticed that the wind had subsided, the sea was calm. A sudden rift in the low-hanging clouds revealed the rocky walls of a long, narrow fiord, at the inner end of which rested a village and the port of our first stop. It seemed incredible that a ship could steam for days over a featureless ocean with no sun, moon, stars, or land visible—only gray sky above and gray water surrounding—and still find its way into that narrow inlet without cracking up on the rocks.

How did this ship safely navigate such a voyage? Well, there are numerous aids to navigation which were utilized, but basically the story

was this: Up on the bridge the skipper and navigator had charts of these waters showing the proper course to be steered for the voyage from Seattle to our destination. To steer these courses the navigator did not have to depend on seeing the sun, moon, stars, or land to determine his direction—he looked at his compass and steered by that. And because that compass was reliable and remained fixed—pointing steadily in one direction—the navigator had something to go by.

Often I have thought of the Christian and his “compass” which gives him direction on his voyage through life. He need not be lost during the storms at sea, wondering and guessing at which way to go and which course to steer; he can fix his heart on God, live by His directives, and safely navigate life’s waters because, with the Psalmist, he can say, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.”

After several months in the Aleutians the author was transferred to the Navy Section Base, Savannah, Georgia. At the end of two months there he received orders to the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Belleau Wood*, CVL-24, somewhere in the Pacific.

"Keep Your Eye on the Cross"

Before the Navy sends men out to sea duty they give them a test to determine their "night vision" or ability to see in the dark. A man with inferior adaptation would make a poor lookout on the night watches. The same is true for an officer as a potential officer of the deck. Men at sea must have sharp eyes for night vision.

The test we went through was something like this: a group of us was ushered into a totally dark room where we sat for several minutes. Then, one at a time, we were called to have our eyes checked. A pharmacist's mate instructed us to focus our attention on a dim red cross which appeared to be about an inch high. An extremely dim image of an airplane was then flashed at different points around that cross. The light of this image was so dim that it was almost undiscernible. Our job was to report the direction in which the image was heading.

Our eyes are so constructed that in twilight and darkness we cannot see as sharply by looking directly at an object as by looking a bit to one side of it or above it. In this test we found that

we were blind to the plane when we looked straight at it, but when we kept our eyes on the cross, we could see the plane! I can still hear that pharmacist's mate's voice in the darkness as each plane image appeared, "Now keep your eye on the cross!"

There are many things in life which we do not understand. "We see through a glass, darkly." But if we keep our eyes on the Cross we will see all we need to see in this life.

There are many divisions in Christendom, divisions which frequently collide and hinder each other. Essential truths which they all share in common center on the Cross of Christ and His resurrection. If Christians would take their attention off the nonessentials and "keep their eyes on the cross," there would be less stumbling in the dark and less confusion in this world. More people now outside the fold would enter in.

What's in a Name?

When I received orders to the *Belleau Wood*, she was out in the Pacific with Task Force 58. My trip to her was through San Francisco, where I met a few fellows on their way back from the Pacific. In conversation they often asked what ship I was going to. When I answered, *Belleau Wood*, each one of them lifted his eyebrows and commented, "You're lucky. She's a good one." While in Pearl Harbor awaiting further transportation, I struck up a few acquaintances with men who were familiar with the fleet. When they learned of my assignment, they agreed unanimously, "The *Belleau Wood* is a good ship."

Each ship's performance imparts a flavor to her name. When men who know ships get together, the mention of a ship's name brings up qualities which that name connotes—which that name stands for. One need only mention *Lexington*, *Hornet*, *Intrepid*, *Enterprise*, *Franklin*, *Belleau Wood*, and immediately definite characteristics associated with those names step forward, some good and some bad.

When your associates mention your name,

what comes to their minds? When your schoolmates or neighbors think of you, what do they think of? When your children consider you, what thoughts march through their minds? Is any associate of yours likely to think of your life as a good reason for believing in Jesus?

What does your name stand for?

*Drifting carelessly with the tide, drifting over
the waters wide*

*With no Captain your course to guide, drift-
ing over life's sea.*

*Drifting on, with no shore in view, think not
skies will be always blue.*

*Storm and shipwreck will come to you, drift-
ing over life's sea.*

*Drift no longer! Let Jesus save, let Him
guide you across the wave,
Lest you sink in a sinner's grave, drifting
over life's sea.*

—E. E. Hewitt

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Reporting for Duty

The many fighting ships of Task Force 58 lay at anchor in the vast lagoon of Eniwetok atoll. They had just come in from a foray deep into enemy waters where they had struck Japanese military installations and shipping far to the west. Carriers, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers were resting for a few days, refueling, reprovisioning, and being repaired before steaming out again for another swat at the enemy. Also riding at anchor were countless freighters, tankers, tenders, repair ships, patrol craft, and miscellaneous auxiliary vessels — a heterogeneous assembly of ships with all the supplies and equipment needed to keep the fleet on the move. It was an amazing armada sheltered inside that low, thin, sandy, palm-studded ring of coral known as Eniwetok. From a distance the hundreds of masts looked like a forest rising out of the ocean. As our transport steamed into the lagoon, all of us peeled our eyes for the ships to which we had orders to report. Mine was a carrier, the *Belleau Wood*. The transport anchored near the carriers, and after a short boat ride, I was climbing the gangway to report for duty.

Through the years there has been a definite procedure for new men to follow in reporting for duty to a ship. At the head of the gangway the new arrival salutes the officer of the deck, gives his name, and says, "Reporting for duty, sir." He is then conducted to the Executive Officer for assignment of duties, and eventually he sees the Captain.

After I had reported for duty on the *Belleau Wood*, I thought of the day I had reported for a different type of duty several years earlier. As a boy I had been impressed by the life of one who had said, "Follow me." I felt I should follow Him, that I should dedicate my life to Him, and live according to the principles He prescribed. I felt I should report to Him for duty. I did, and He has made life worth living.

To all who are concerned about living the most satisfying and meaningful life, I recommend that they report to Jesus Christ for duty.

Wings on the Sea

He was the number one ace in his air group; he had destroyed more enemy planes than anybody else on our carrier. I admired the quiet, efficient manner in which he went about his business. His modesty made him a favorite among his shipmates.

One day he gave me an autographed picture of himself seated in the cockpit of his Hellcat fighter plane with the rows of red and white "rising suns" painted on its side. Beneath his name he had written a motto which had meant much to him during his months as a naval aviator:

*"If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me"*
(Psalm 139:9, 10).

Lt. Robert B. "Buzz" Carlson had taken those wings over miles and miles of sea in this vast Pacific Ocean. He testified to finding God's hand there—a leading and holding power.



Official U. S. Navy Photograph

LIEUTENANT ROBERT CARLSON

*"If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the
uttermost parts of the sea . . ."*



Official U. S. Navy Photograph
GUN CREW AT GENERAL QUARTERS



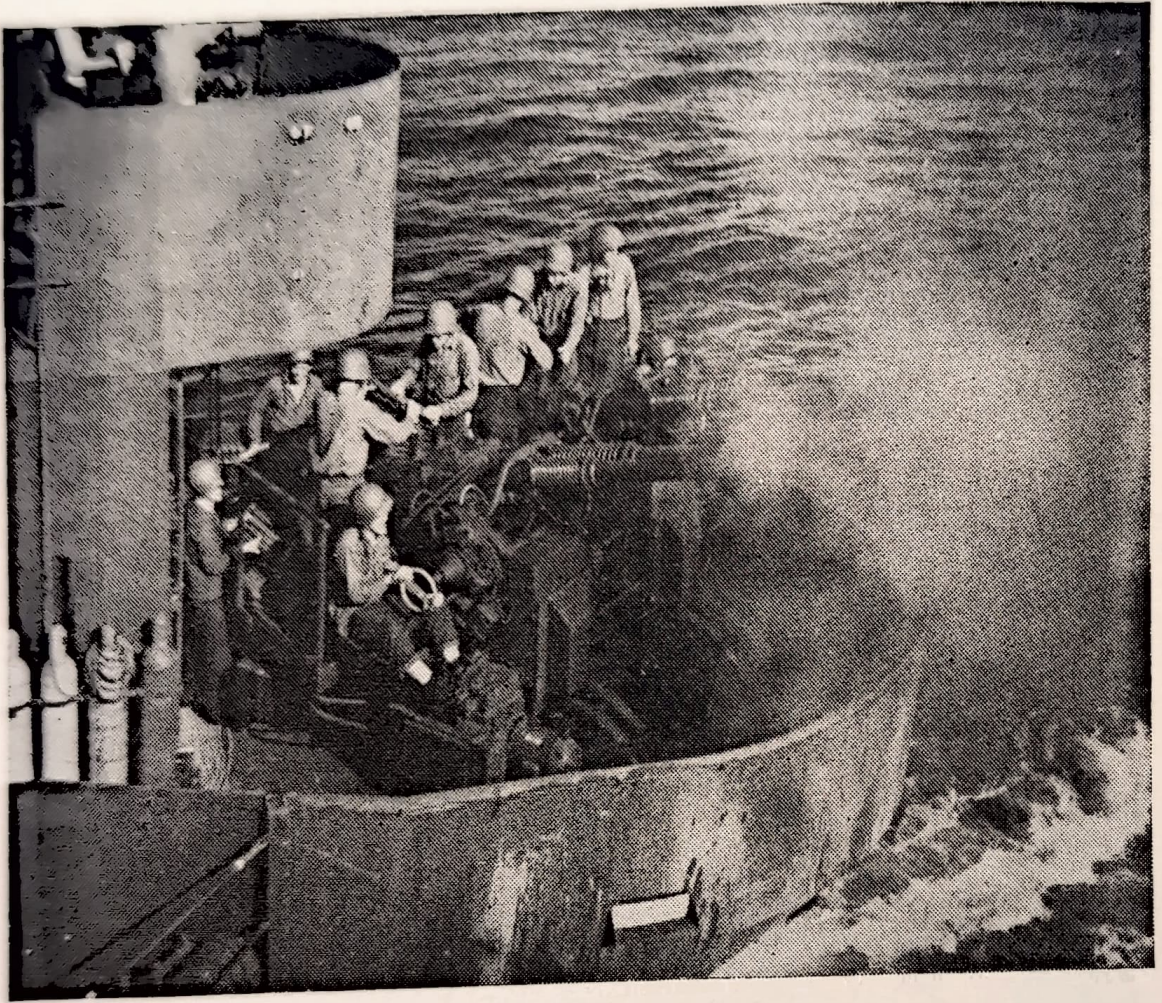
Official U. S. Navy Photograph
GASSING AIRPLANES
(page 53)



Official U. S. Navy Photograph
ON THE CATAPULT



Official U. S. Navy Photograph
OFF THE CATAPULT
(page 61)



Official U. S. Navy Photograph
ACTION

Though the angry surges roll
On my tempest-driven soul,
I am peaceful, for I know,
Wildly though the winds may blow,
I've an anchor safe and sure,
That can evermore endure.

Mighty tides about me sweep;
Perils lurk within the deep;
Angry clouds o'ershade the sky,
And the tempest rises high;
Still I stand the tempest's shock,
For my anchor grips the Rock.

I can feel the anchor fast
As I meet each sudden blast,
And the cable, though unseen,
Bears the heavy strain between;
Through the storm I safely ride
Till the turning of the tide.

And it holds, my anchor holds;
Blow your wildest then, O gale,
On my bark so small and frail;
By His grace I shall not fail,
For my anchor holds, it firmly holds,
My anchor holds!

—W. C. Martin

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Distinguishing Characteristics

The ability to recognize enemy aircraft and ships is desperately important. On some occasions during the war enemy planes attacked us when our own planes were overhead. Inability to distinguish friend from foe would have been calamitous, and at times did result in painful confusion.

To develop a sharp sense for recognizing planes and ships we were drilled intensively in "recognition." Classes were held to acquaint us with the distinguishing characteristics of every type of craft which we might encounter.

Planes and ships have distinguishing characteristics which one can recognize at a glance and at a great distance. Different combinations of different types of wings, engines, and tail assemblies produce peculiarities for each class of plane. Similarly for ships, there is a typical arrangement of superstructures and stacks for each type. For instance, the pyramid in the middle of the flight deck is distinctive of Essex carriers' profiles, as is the cleft superstructure of Cleveland cruisers, and the two stacks and separate superstructure of North Carolina battleships. One need not go

aboard a ship or even get close enough to read her number and name in order to tell what class she is. From a considerable distance and *at a glance* it is possible to identify the type of a ship because of her distinctive characteristics.

When people step into our homes they ought to be able to tell at a glance that our homes are Christian—because of distinguishing characteristics. Are there any pictures on the walls of your home that are *distinctive*? Is a Bible in a conspicuous place *and* giving evidence of usage? Does a guest hear grace at your meals—and prayer? Is the program which your radio renders appropriate? Are there any mottoes on your walls to catch the eye of a briefly visiting salesman? Could a Fuller Brush salesman enter your home, demonstrate his wares, and leave without seeing *anything* that would classify your home as Christian?

What are the distinguishing characteristics of your home?

The Dawn Alert

During the war our ship went to "general quarters" for one hour before sunrise on every day at sea. "General quarters" meant battle stations, and we went to battle stations for that important hour because during those moments a ship was especially vulnerable to attack. As the shades of night dissolved in the glow of the eastern sky, a ship could be seen in silhouette from the west by an enemy submarine or low-flying torpedo plane. But to us on the ship the enemy craft was practically invisible, concealed in the darkness of the western horizon. We manned our battle stations in the darkness an hour before sunrise so that our eyes could become adapted and we could see as well as possible. After the sun had risen and the entire sky and sea were equally illuminated, destroying any "blind spot" from which the enemy could attack, we secured from general quarters and proceeded with the routine duties of the day.

We often called this morning hour the "dawn alert." All hands were required to be up and at their battle stations with battle gear ready—just in case. No men were excused, except those

confined to sick bay. No matter how tired a man was, no matter if he had been up until midnight on duty or had been on the mid-watch (from midnight until four A.M.), no matter how busy he was with "other things"—when the battle gong sounded, he *had* to man his station for the dawn alert.

Experienced Christians have learned through the years that one cannot maintain his spiritual life without a definite period each day devoted to contacting the Master privately—a period in which one withdraws from mundane cares to pray in seclusion, to read the Word, and to draw upon a divine source of power. Most Christians recommend that this be done in the morning when one's mind and heart are fresh and clear. Strengthened, lifted, and encouraged, one is then ready to proceed with the routine duties of the day.

If the Navy felt that for their cause it was important for men to arise unusually early for a "dawn alert," is it any less essential that we of the Christian faith arise—unusually early, if necessary—for a "dawn alert" with Christ?

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35).

The Morning Watch

It was fifteen minutes before sunrise. The ship had been at routine general quarters for forty-five minutes already as per the custom of manning all battle stations—the “dawn alert”—for one full hour before sunrise day after day after day. At that time my station was on a gun control circuit on the open bridge, several feet above the flight deck and scores of feet above the water. Leaning on the bridge shield, I gazed out across the featureless sea at the eastern horizon and sky aglow with the dawn.

“Beautiful sunrise, isn’t it?” I commented to a shipmate next to me. He too was leaning on the shield, gazing out across the rippling sea. Turning slowly toward me, he struggled to raise his sleep-weighted eyelids and then in a sleep-drugged voice replied, “Alex, I never saw a single sunrise before I joined this ———— Navy, and if I ever get out of the Navy I’ll never see another sunrise!”

It was important on ships at sea that their crews be awake and alert during this critical hour before sunrise. It required discipline to break the night’s rest to report to battle stations

before dawn; but this hour was important. It took discipline to arise that early—it doesn't come naturally to most human beings.

Success in any venture depends upon discipline—the ordering of the elements of one's life. His desires, thoughts, and actions must be controlled and manipulated so that they will advance him toward his life's goal, toward the things he wants to achieve.

The Christian's purpose is to do the will of God. A "disciple" is one who "disciplines" himself to achieve this purpose. It demands rigid discipline, stiffer than generals and admirals demand of their soldiers and sailors.

There is one phase of Christian life in which most of us are shamefully lax and almost devoid of discipline—it is in the observance of a quiet period of prayer and meditation each day. It is impossible to live successfully a single day without contacting God. This is not done in a vague, indirect, hazy manner. We can reach Him directly as our Heavenly Father who is interested in every detail of our lives. We reach Him directly because the Christian life is a personal fellowship between Father and son. A Christian is a "son." Are we so rash as to think that we can serve a single day on our own strength without the help of our Father?

The best time for reporting to God is in the morning before the day's work begins—during the Morning Watch. Christ observed the Morning Watch: "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35).

A. J. "Dad" Elliott, outstanding youth evangelist, tells of an experience he had many years ago at a student convention at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. John R. Mott had addressed a group on the importance of the Morning Watch, of observing it inexorably and of observing it *early* each day. Elliott was a bit dubious of the idea and questioned whether Mott practiced what he preached. To find out he arose at 4 A.M. the next morning, left his tent, walked up a little hill, and sat down near a tree where he had a vantage view of Mott's tent. Elliott thought to himself, "Now, John R., I'll see when your lamp goes on in your tent and when you begin your watch."

The minutes passed. An hour passed. The lookout's eye had detected no sign of movement in the tent. Then came the dawn. The sun rose. Elliott was just about ready to rise, saying triumphantly, "There, John R., just as I thought," when behind him he heard a crackling of twigs along a path, and out into the tent clearing stepped John R.

Mott, Bible in hand, returning from his Morning Watch.

John R. Mott is just one of the great Christians who testify to the importance of meeting God in the morning.

It must be pointed out that it isn't necessary to arise *before the sun* in order to enjoy the benefits of the Morning Watch. The essential thing is not the actual hour of arising but that you start the day with God in your Morning Watch *before the day's work*. This may or it may not require you to get up before sunrise.

The Morning Watch is an essential for spiritual development. Observance of it is a first step in Christian progress; the flickering out of the flame of private prayer and the Morning Watch is the first step in spiritual decay and degeneration.

This merits repeating for emphasis: the flickering out of the flame of private prayer and the Morning Watch is the first development in spiritual decay and degeneration.

The Christian ministry is weak in leading its church members to establish the habit of daily private devotions, preferably the Morning Watch. In all my life I have never heard a single sermon devoted to encouraging the formation of this critical habit. (I often wonder how many ministers are as faithful in observing their Morning Watch

as we Navy fellows were in observing our dawn alert.) It was through my college Y. M. C. A. that I was introduced to the value of the Morning Watch.

The usefulness, influence, and efficiency of the church would be multiplied beyond measure if every member observed a half-hour Morning Watch. The ministry should inspire the people to do it and instruct them in how to observe it.

Distinct aid and direction in establishing this habit of the morning devotional period can be drawn from a choice pamphlet, "The Morning Watch," by John R. Mott. These are available at The Association Press, 347 Madison Avenue, New York 17, New York.

The Secret

*I met God in the morning
When my day was at its best,
And His Presence came like sunrise,
Like a glory in my breast.*

*All day long the Presence lingered,
All day long He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness
O'er a very troubled sea.*

Other ships were blown and battered,
Other ships were sore distressed,
But the winds that seemed to drive them
Brought to us a peace and rest.

Then I thought of other mornings,
With a keen remorse of mind,
When I too had loosed the moorings,
With the Presence left behind.

So I think I know the secret,
Learned from many a troubled way:
You must seek Him in the morning
If you want Him through the day!

—From *Hilltop Verses and Prayers*
by Ralph S. Cushman

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Refueling

"Man all stations and communications for fueling from tanker, starboard side."

During the war Task Force 58 stayed at sea for weeks on each cruise, churning the ocean as planes from the carriers swatted one enemy target after another. Such sustained offensives would have been impossible if the ships had been forced to return to port every time they needed fuel. Few cruises could have exceeded ten days (especially for the destroyers) if fuel oil had been available only at Pearl Harbor, Eniwetok, Ulithi, or other friendly harbors. But tankers brought oil to us, and twice a week we retired a few score miles from the forward area to rendezvous with these ships. Carriers, battlehips, cruisers, and destroyers took turns going alongside the tankers. When our turn came we crept up parallel with the slowly moving oiler and steamed next to her for two or three hours while we hauled across bight lines, hauling lines, fuel hoses, and telephone lines. When our capacity had been filled, we returned the hoses and lines and slowly pulled away. By refueling at sea we were able to cruise for weeks, harrassing the enemy without

the necessity of returning to port for supplies.

Twice a week was frequent enough for refilling the ship's tanks, but there were certain elements of our carrier which had to be refueled daily—the planes. Very early each morning, long before the rest of us “hit the deck,” men of the gas gang arose to refuel airplanes and get them ready for a dawn patrol or the day's first strike. While most of the ship slept, these men were up and performing this important responsibility.

There is one type of fuel which we need renewed about twice a week in our spiritual lives—the benefits we receive from public worship with other brothers in the faith. But there are elements in our natures which need to be refueled daily. Before the wheels of the day start rolling our spiritual resources must be renewed in a morning tryst with God. We cannot hope to serve a day successfully unless we start that day by refueling from Him, the source of power.

When that early hour came for gassing planes, no man involved was allowed to turn over in his “rack” and enjoy a few more minutes' sleep. The fueling came first! Are we as faithful in tending to our spiritual fueling each morning?

“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up” (Psalm 5:3).

From Battleships to Carriers

For over one hundred fifty years the backbone of the Navy was the battleship—the big slugger which overpowered the enemy. Naval tactics centered around her. From the time of John Paul Jones' *Bon Homme Richard* to the opening act of World War II, the method of naval warfare featured floating gun platforms with guns to fire farther and faster than the enemy's. Improvements in guns and these floating platforms advanced until the new battleships of 35,000 tons mounted 16-inch guns which could fire about 20 miles. Other types of ships—cruisers, carriers, destroyers, and submarines were simply supporting members in the cast.

Then came World War II. The Navy's purpose remained the same—to destroy the enemy's sea power, but no longer would the old *method* work. A new element, the airplane, had appeared to dominate naval warfare. A ship carrying planes could "reach" 200-300 miles as compared to the 20 miles of the battleship's guns. The Navy had to employ a new method to achieve the same old purpose. The battleship gave way to the carrier. The flat-top became the slugger, and the battle-

ship, once the dominant element, joined the supporting cast.

This was an abrupt change, a bitter pill for old battleship men to swallow. As late as 1942 there were still a few die-hards who were fighting for the old tradition of basing our effort on the battleship. Fortunately the new method won out, and carriers took the lead. We would have lost to Japan's Imperial Fleet if we had relied on battle-wagons instead of carriers.

The church's *purpose* is the same as it ever was—to reach the community and world for Christ. But how about our *method*? Just because a method worked forty, eighty, or one hundred fifty years ago doesn't mean it is the best method for today. If your Sunday school is stalled, if your church services are stuck, if evangelistic services are in a rut, why assume that your method is satisfactory just because "we've always done it this way"?

Examine yourself to see that *you* are in God's will—and then dare to try some new methods if the old ones aren't working.

Replace your battleships with carriers.

Cruising in Column

It's a thrill to see a column of ships in perfect alignment plowing through the sea. From all angles they look good.

During the one hundred fifty years preceding World War II our Navy's tactics of warfare were based on the principle of "columns." When the enemy was engaged in combat, each ship was supposed to be in its station in column and know what to do in all phases of the battle. Ships were aligned in column so that all could fire simultaneous broadsides at the foe without being stymied by a friendly vessel in between.

With the advent of carriers came significant changes. Since carrier planes could attack any target within 300 miles, they could take care of an enemy fleet long before the two fleets got close enough to fire guns at each other. Cruising formations were therefore changed completely from columns to circular dispositions. The purpose was to arrange the ships for the best defense against enemy *plane* attack. Ships were arranged in concentric circles, with carriers in the middle.

The shift in method from cruising in columns to cruising in clusters was revolutionary. The old

method had been followed for decades, but it no longer worked.

Inspect the methods of your church, your Sunday school, your Y. P. M. S. If they are not working, it may be that the *men* doing the work aren't "right"—be sure that you as individuals are in spiritual condition, and then scrutinize your methods. Just because they are traditional doesn't mean they are the most effective now.

Don't continue to cruise in columns just because you have "always done it that way." Find a better way.

*Upon a wide and stormy sea,
Thou art sailing to eternity,
And thy great Admiral orders thee,
"Sail on, sail on, sail on."*

*Sail on! Sail on! the storms will soon
be past,
The darkness will not always last!
Sail on! Sail on! God lives!
And He commands, "Sail on! Sail on!"*

—Charles H. Gabriel

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180-Degree Turn

The conversion of a soul is like a ship reversing its course—making a 180-degree turn. Profound discussions, involved explanations, and sometimes confusion can follow in answer to “What is conversion?” Actually it isn’t complicated at all. Instead of steering for your own selfish goal in life you throw your rudder, turn completely around (180 degrees), and start sailing in the opposite direction. Selfishness gives way to unselfishness, and your life becomes centered on Christ instead of yourself.

A second aspect of the “turn” is this: after turning 180 degrees, a ship is still the *same* ship. A destroyer doesn’t become a cruiser, nor does a battleship suddenly become a carrier. Many new-born Christians are perplexed on this point. They look around at other Christians, notice differences in reaction to conversion, differences in their personalities, and begin to wonder if they really have “it.” They wonder because they are not exactly like other Christians, in particular the ones the evangelist has held up as the ideal type.

God gave us talents, varying with individuals. He gave us personalities, no two of which are

alike. Just because you didn't experience the same kind of emotions at conversion as somebody else did, don't doubt your conversion. Just because you do not "feel" as some other Christians "feel," don't doubt your faith. The important thing is—did you make the turn? Are you steering the course Christ has ordered for *you*? He has promised to save you if you are.

If God designed you to be a cruiser, don't worry about trying to look like a carrier. Rather, it is your responsibility to make the turn and steer the course.

*The mercy of God is an ocean divine,
A boundless and fathomless flood;
Launch out in the deep, cut away the shoreline,
And be lost in the fullness of God.*

*O many, alas, only stand on the shore,
And gaze on the ocean so wide;
They never have ventured its depths to explore
Or to launch on the fathomless tide.*

*Launch out into the deep,
O let the shoreline go;
Launch out, launch out in the ocean divine,
Out where the full tides flow.*

—A. B. Simpson

Decision

On June 19, 1944, the planes of Task Force 58 under Vice Admiral Marc Mitscher were pounding the enemy airfields and army air force based on Guam. Guam had been pretty well blasted when fresh enemy planes appeared from somewhere to renew the battle. They were carrier-based planes of the Japanese navy. Their presence indicated that the Japanese fleet, which for so long had refused to come out and fight, was out to the west somewhere in the Philippine Sea. Task Force 58 sped west in search of the foe. They detected our maneuver and retreated as fast as they could. All night long and into the next day the pursuit continued. Search planes of Task Force 58 covered the sea for hundreds of miles, but failed to find them. At last, in the middle of the afternoon and just as fuel was running low, a search plane spotted the fleeing fleet 300 miles to the west. He radioed back his report.

Our ships did not have enough fuel left to pursue through another night and attack the following morning. The long cruise back to the nearest friendly harbor, Kwajalein, for refueling would

take all remaining fuel. But the afternoon was almost gone, and planes launched at four o'clock couldn't reach the target much before dark and then would have the long 300-mile return trip to make in the dark with night landings awaiting when they finally arrived at their carriers. Admiral Mitscher had a tough decision to make. Decision to attack would risk hundreds of fliers' lives and involve a gamble on fuel. Indecision would let slip from his grasp an elusive foe which he had been trying to corner for months. He did not take long to decide. "Attack!" he ordered, and our planes roared from flight decks to deal the enemy a terrific defeat in the famous First Battle of the Philippine Sea.

Every one of us during life faces countless crossroads of decision, when he must decide one way or the other. The most important is the choice of what he is going to do with his life—whether or not he will dedicate it to Christ. A decision for Him makes life worth living. Indecision, delaying, or stalling has exactly the same result as deciding against Him.

Mitscher's decision is famous. His decision won. How about your decision regarding Christ's call? You must face it. You must make it. *Throw your will* toward the right decision.

"I will arise and go to my father" (Luke 15: 18).

What Colors Are You Flying?

One day at sea when I had nothing to do at the moment, I stepped out onto our forecastle (the front of the main deck) and moved up as far as the anchors. The bow of the ship was moving easily up and down as we plowed through the gently rolling sea. I put one foot up on the lower lifeline (railing chain) and leaned my elbows on the upper one. While relaxing thus I gazed out around at the other ships in our task group. There were 32 vessels in all—five carriers, three battleships, six cruisers, and seventeen destroyers. There were many different classes of ships, but they were all flying the same flag. They were of different types because they had different services to perform, but the one thing that unified that group was the colors each ship was flying.

Two thoughts came to my mind as I looked at all those different ships. The first was this; because another ship was not exactly like our carrier did not mean that it wasn't an American ship. It was different, to be sure, and yet it was one of us—it was flying the same flag. Just because other Christians are different from you and

do not agree with you on everything, just because another denomination is different from yours, be careful what you say about them. Take a look at the flag they are flying. Are they on your side? God keep us from wasting ammunition on our own ships flying our own flag!

The second thought was this: the fact that we were not like other ships didn't mean that we were not in the fleet. The fact that you are different from other Christians doesn't mean that you are not a Christian—as long as you are following Christ wholeheartedly. Now there are those who would condemn you because you do not agree with them on certain minor details. There are a few preachers and evangelists (not many) who publicly proclaim that *you* are not a Christian if you disagree with them on minor issues which to *them* are besetting sins. In other words, there are those who would design you according to their own design instead of helping you to serve God better the way He designed you. Let nobody shake your faith because you are not like him, because you do not react in the same way he does. All of us are different, with different services to perform. The important thing is this: what colors are you flying?

Steady On

One of the standard phrases employed by the helmsman on a ship is "Steady on." As a ship plows along and a new course is necessary, the officer of the deck gives the order to the helmsman to steer such and such a course. The helmsman turns the wheel to swing the ship around to the ordered course. As soon as the vessel has swung to the new heading and is steadied upon it, the helmsman reports to the OOD that he is "steady on" the course. A good helmsman continues to keep the ship "steady on."

Rarely did I hear our helmsman make his report of "steady on" without then thinking of the analogy to the life of a Christian. Here we are, people on this earth, each one of us living his life in a way that is comparable to sailing on life's ocean. Many people are steering their own course with no consideration for God's plan for their lives, ignoring Him completely. Others are trying to steer the course He has for them. Some of these do a poor job and wander over the sea in a wiggly, vacillating, inconsistent performance (down in the dumps one day, up on the heights the next, reliable and dependable one day, un-

reliable the next). Others, however, steer a steady course—consistent and unwavering.

Can you report to God that you are “steady on”?

*Safe upon the billowy deep,
Loving Lord, Thy servants keep;
Helpless, trusting pilgrims they,
Guard them on their watery way.*

*In the morning fill their sails,
'Mid the dark send favoring gales;
If their sky be overcast,
Calm the waves, and still the blast.*

*Let Thy sunshine guide by day;
Send at eve the starry ray;
Through the watches of the night,
Be Thou, Lord, their shining light.*

*Thus as hour by hour rolls by
Watch them with Thy sleepless eye.
Guide with Thine almighty hand
Safe unto the haven-land.*

—H. Coppee

'Tis the Set of the Sail

One of the intriguing aspects of sailing a boat is that, regardless of the direction of the wind, a boat with sails properly set can sail in any direction. To those unacquainted with sailboats it seems incredible that a boat being driven along by the wind can actually make headway against that wind and can sail opposite to the direction in which the breeze is blowing.

To be sure, a boat sailing east and being driven by a wind *from* the east cannot make very fast time, nor can she head directly into the wind. She must alternate her course first to one side of the wind and then to the other. This is known as "tacking" in nautical jargon. But a wind from the east does not prevent a boat from sailing from west to east; it simply makes the trip longer and more difficult. The direction a sailboat goes depends not on the direction of the wind but on the way her sails are set.

The same principle is so true in life that attention scarcely need be called to it. The winds of "circumstances" which make life miserable for some people are the same circumstances which other people use to make them better individuals.

"It isn't what happens to you, it's what you let it do to you...."

To some people obstacles and burdens are impediments; to others they are steppingstones. Among my friends is a man who has had a very unfortunate matrimonial experience. Some men under similar circumstances become bitter and discouraged; he has remained kind and considerate through it all. He is making a steppingstone out of this adverse circumstance. He has set his sails so that the adverse wind will drive him forward instead of backward.

I know a man and his wife who have had two tragic experiences. Their first child died in infancy. Two and a half years later a second child arrived, only to die a day later. In such misfortune many parents would have become bitter—but not this man and his wife. In calm composure they said that God took their children Home and that they are building a family in Heaven.

Many Christian boys entered the military service and lost their spiritual life. The gale blew them onto the rocks. Other Christian boys in the same military service grew in spiritual stature. The same gale blew them forward. Why this contrast? Why in the same gale did some make headway and others lose headway? Because their sails were set differently.

In this life we have complete control over the setting of our sails. Nobody else sets them for us. We choose our goal and then set our sails to reach it. Where our boat goes depends not on the way the wind blows but on the way our sails are set.

*"One ship drives east and another west
By the selfsame winds that blow;
'Tis the set of the sail and not the gale
That determines the way they go.*

*"Like the winds of the sea are the winds that blow
As we journey along through life;
'Tis the set of the soul that determines the goal
And not the storms and the strife."*

*Sometimes when my faith would falter
And no sunlight I can see;
I just lift my eyes to Jesus
And I whisper, "Pilot me."*

*Often, when my soul is weary
And the days seem, oh, so long,
I just look up to my Pilot
And I hear this blessed song:*

*"Fear thou not, for I'll be with thee,
I will still thy pilot be;
Never mind the tossing billows;
Take my hand and trust in Me."*

*When temptations 'round me gather
And I almost lose my way,
Somehow, in the raging tempest
I can hear my Saviour say,*

*"Fear thou not, for I'll be with thee,
I will still thy pilot be;
Never mind the tossing billows,
Take My hand and trust in Me."*

—Emily D. Wilson

Your Feeling Your Rudder?

When ocean swells are from the side of a ship, she rolls from side to side as alternating swells and troughs pass under her. When the swells are from ahead or astern, a ship pitches up and down somewhat like a teeter-totter. Other things being equal, it is more uncomfortable on a large ship to roll than to pitch. When a ship rolls, all loose items skid from side to side, dishes scoot off tables, chairs tip over, and men experience difficulty in walking. With a pitching movement, however, the motion is alternately up and down. It is easier to move around and keep things in place.

We were crossing the Pacific, bound for San Diego, when we encountered several days of rough seas where the swells were from the port (lefthand) side. It was uncomfortable rolling from side to side all those hours. It was difficult to stay in one's "sack" at night. We could have changed our course in consideration for our feelings—to make us feel good—but then we would not have been headed for our goal! If our feelings had been the criterion for picking our courses, we might never have arrived. (Only

when the swells reach typhoon proportions and threaten to capsize the ship is the course changed "into the sea.")

Why do so many people in their Christian experience let their feelings determine their course? Why doubt your faith when you do not feel good, when you do not feel "spiritually buoyant"? Christ has defined our goal, and He has instructed us as to the courses which will get us there. Many are the unfortunate folk who are confused, worrying because they don't feel "blessed," perplexed as to the course to steer, always shifting their rudder because they rely on their feelings.

Letting your feeling control your rudder is fatal. Follow Christ, steer what He orders, and forget your feelings—"lose yourself."

*I trust in God wherever I may be
Upon the land or on the rolling sea.
For come what may, from day to day
My heavenly Father watches over me.*

*I trust in God, I know He cares for me
On mountain bleak or on the stormy sea;
Though billows roll, He keeps my soul;
My heavenly Father watches over me.*

—Rev. W. C. Martin

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The Kamikaze Test

"Kamikaze" was the name for Japanese suicide planes which, during the war, attacked us with only one objective—to make a suicide crash on a ship. They dived out of the clouds from high altitudes so suddenly that we had to be ready at our guns—or else. The sight of a Kamikaze screaming down out of the sky was terrifying.

I vividly remember one such attack. It was October 30, 1944, and Task Force 58 was prowling around east of the Philippines about two hundred miles from Samar. It was just ten days after the Yanks had invaded the Philippines at Leyte and only five days since the greatest naval battle in history, the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea. About two o'clock on this sunny afternoon the battle gong sounded, sending all hands to general quarters. My station was with gun mount and director No. 2 on the forward portside of the flight deck. Enemy planes were closing fast. One swooped down out of the clouds to crash the *Franklin*. Flames and smoke piled skyward from her blazing flight deck. Seconds later another suicide plane dived out from the same part of the sky and came streaking at us. Our guns chattered

as we fired away. He was a green-blue-nosed Zero, and as our gunfire converged around him his spinning, glistening propeller seemed to me to be headed straight for gun mount No. 2. The Kamikaze crashed amid our parked planes on the after end of the flight deck. The explosion and flowing flames of burning gasoline killed ninety-two men and burned one hundred fifty more.

As that plane streaked in on us I didn't have time to do much thinking, but after the excitement had subsided, I did some sober reflecting and came up with four conclusions about four values in life which some folk consider important and which some people make supreme.

1. When death on the wings of a Japanese Zero is plunging down on you at a speed of 500 miles an hour, *money* has no value whatsoever. The gun tub could be lined with \$1,000 bills, and the gunner would be no better off than a pauper. This is true for wealth, property, and material possessions of any category.

2. *Scholastic* achievement (college degrees and academic honors) have no value at a time like this. When death is overhead, a bushel of Phi Beta Kappa keys is absolutely worthless.

3. *Popularity* and *fame* have no value when one is standing at his gun answering the hardest

question life can ask. At such a time he cares not so much for the approbation of men as for the approval of the Great Captain.

4. To some folk *pleasure* is the main goal in life. Yet a life which has been devoted to fun and pleasure has nothing substantial to lean on when a Kamikaze is coming in.

When you are staring a Kamikaze in the face, only one thing has value—the assurance that there is a God who knows you, whom you know, and to whom you are ready to report if death moves you on. This alone has value. I know, for I have been there when the test was applied.

In your life are you giving priority to the spiritual values which will endure? Are you giving priority to your Morning Watch of Bible study and prayer? to prayer meetings? Or are you giving priority to those values which turn to stubble when put to the test?

“What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world . . . ?”

O Lord, be with us when we sail upon the
lonely deep,
Our guard when on the silent deck the
nightly watch we keep.

The calm, the breeze, the gale, the storm, the
ocean and the land,
All, all are Thine, and held within the hollow
of Thy hand.

As when on blue Gennesaret rose high the
angry wave,
And Thy disciples quailed in dread, one word
of Thine could save.

So when the fiercer storms arise from man's
unbridled will,
Be Thou, Lord, present in our hearts to whisper,
"Peace, be still."

Be Thou the mainguard of our host till war
and dangers cease.
Defend the right, put up the sword, and
through the world make peace.

Across this troubled tide of life Thyself our
pilot be,
Until we reach that better land, the land that
knows no sea.

—E. A. Dayman

"Fear Not Them Who Kill"

The battle gong was clanging. Ladders rattled and decks rumbled with the traffic of hundreds of men running to battle stations. Water-tight doors slammed shut. Battle helmets, flash-proof gear, and life belts were quickly donned by all hands. The guns encircling our flight deck swept upward to focus on the diving planes. The ships of the task group were under attack.

This was not a new experience. It actually got to be an old story—this sequence of hearing that splitting gong, running to battle stations, sometimes for a false alarm, often to see the attack broken up by friendly planes or other ships, but sometimes having to beat off the attack with our own guns. Each time that gong rang and I hustled for my gun, I found myself unconsciously praying, "O God, help us."

I vividly recall one afternoon when a plane penetrated our defenses and dived at us on a suicide mission. Our guns chattered as he streaked in. With death zooming out of the skies at one like that, one would have to be crazy not to be afraid. And yet the fear which a Christian experiences at such a time is not a mortal fear. For

even death is not the end; there is something beyond for a Christian.

On that sunny afternoon I learned for the first time the meaning of Matthew 10:28, "Fear not them which kill the body" That verse has solid "tangible" value. I know.

*When storms around are sweeping,
When lone my watch I'm keeping,
'Mid fires of evil falling,
'Mid tempter's voices calling,
Remember me, O mighty One!*

*When walking on Life's ocean,
Control its raging motion;
When from its dangers shrinking,
When in its dread deeps sinking,
Remember me, O mighty One!*

*When weight of sin oppresses,
When dark despair distresses,
All thro' the life that's mortal,
And when I pass death's portal,
Remember me, O mighty One!*

—Author Unknown

A Sense of Duty

On March 18, 1945, Task Force 58 was just a few score miles from Japan, opening a heavy air attack on Kyushu. The Japanese air force fought back by launching continuous attacks from their Kyushu airfields. All day long our carriers threw strikes at the big southern Nipponese island, and all day long the Japanese threw strikes at us. Our planes shot down most of these enemy planes heading for the fleet. However some did slip through, and the ships remained at battle stations throughout the day and long past midnight to repel these attacks.

At 2:30 the following morning we "secured" from general quarters (having spent twenty consecutive hours on the guns) and "hit the sack" for a few hours' rest. But there was little rest. In forty-five minutes the battle gong clanged. The exhausted crew roused themselves from their coma and dashed back to battle stations at 3:15. This wasn't easy—when the human body is physically and nervously fatigued, it suffers definite pain when jarred from rest. But our lives were at stake! Also we had a duty even in the middle of the night. Nobody thought twice; we simply

did our duty and went, even though we didn't feel like it.

Every single one of us who claims any connection with Christ and the church has a duty to Him and to it. We must perform our responsibility whether we feel like it or not—as long as we are physically and mentally able to do so. Whether that duty is teaching a Sunday-school class, leading a song service, delivering a message, or simply being present in attendance—we are responsible for it.

When your children observe that you feel no concern for the prayer meeting or the Sunday evening service or the Sunday school, when they never hear your voice in prayer at home, what will be their opinion of your sense of Christian duty?

Yet Christianity demands doing more than just one's duty; it demands the "second mile." But one cannot go the second mile until he has gone the first mile. If your performance consists of only those things which are convenient and which you "feel" like doing, you are shirking your duty. This didn't work in the Navy, and it won't work in Christ's church.

A Goodly Heritage

We were cruising off Okinawa. The task group had been subjected to frequent, sudden, sporadic enemy airplane attacks—mostly of the Kamikaze suicide variety. To insure immediate readiness of our guns, the gunners were remaining at their posts all day long from an hour before sunrise to an hour after sunset. We took turns sweeping the sky with our eyes, scanning for Japanese planes.

Several hours passed with no excitement developing. As one's eyes wandered around the skies, his mind wandered too. I particularly remember thinking about a verse and meditation which I had read that morning in a devotional booklet prepared for servicemen. The verse was Psalm 16:6, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

I thought of the collective heritage which belonged to the 1500 of us men on that ship—our country and its way of life which had been given us by those who lived before.

I thought of the personal heritage which had been handed down to me—traditions, ideals, and standards which I had inherited. This heritage

had been nourished primarily through the two roots of my home and my church.

It was in my home that I learned the basic lessons of love, honesty, discipline, consideration for others, economy, courtesy, and judgment. It was here that I heard from my parents the simple story of Jesus and God's love—the story which I have never forgotten.

It was in my church that I heard from consecrated ministers the gospel which made an indelible impression on my mind and soul, and there I was privileged to associate with Christian veterans of many years whose lives were an influence on mine and whose encouragement and prayers through the years have strengthened me.

Off Okinawa that morning a new appreciation for my heritage dawned upon me.

Have you ever considered your heritage? Let us thank God that the lines have fallen to us as they have—that we have a goodly heritage.

H-Hour

"D-Day" was the designation for the day of an invasion—the time when our amphibious forces were scheduled to assault an enemy island or fortress.

"H-Hour" was the designation for the kick-off—the opening moment when the first wave of men was due to hit the beach after churning in toward shore. H-Hour was the time when things were supposed to start. In anticipation of it, all kinds of preparations were made; definite assignments for every man were made in advance so that he knew exactly what to do and where to go. The coxswains of each boat knew exactly on what part of the beach to land. Plans were drawn up in advance for delivering food, ammunition, first aid, and other supplies to the beach so that the soldiers opening the fight at H-Hour would be sustained. Our amphibious invasions throughout the war were models of organization. They reflected through preparation. When H-Hour came, the wheels moved, and things clicked.

What kind of exhibition does your Sunday school, church, or young people's group give when their respective H-Hours roll around on Sunday?

Does H-Hour find each man on duty and knowing what to do? Does the service move with a spirit which indicates careful and prayerful preparation? Or is H-Hour in your church like this: (a) only a few present and ready to "make the beach-head"; (b) a leader who, five minutes after service is scheduled to start, says, "Well, there aren't many here, but I guess it's time to start"; (c) a lack of advance preparation indicated by, "I don't have any song at hand. Any requests?" (d) late arrivals of worshipers who straggle in all through the service to disrupt attention and cause distraction.

Let's show some initiative at our services. When H-Hour arrives, let's be on the job, on time, ready to do our part.

Up Front

That's where the action was. Up front. That's where the battle was pressed. Up front. Out at sea the submarines operated out in front. The fast carrier task forces struck the enemy out in front. The war couldn't have been won if everybody stayed back behind; somebody had to go up front—that was where the action was.

A similar situation is found in the stands at a football game where the crowd naturally gravitates toward the 50-yard line and front seats, where they can be near the game and participate in the spirit of it. In a baseball park the seats which sell first are the box seats near the front. The same goes for a basketball game.

Having played ball since I was a boy and still maintaining a lively interest in the games, I can't help but notice the contrast between the crowd's push toward the front at ball games and the congregation's drag toward the rear in a church. Rare is the church where the back seats don't fill up first. Rare is the congregation which isn't "weighted" lopsidedly toward the rear. Rare is the alert aggressive church member (other than ushers or specially assigned folk) who instinc-

tively slumps into the rear seat. Aggressive people are usually found in the front ranks.

Rear seats are for people who want to be as far away from the service as possible and still not be counted absent. Of course there are a few exceptions to this, such as mothers with infants who disturb the attention of people sitting behind them, but there aren't many exceptions. An inclination to occupy stern seats is not a healthy symptom. Very few successful Christians have found their springboards to abundant spiritual life lashed to the rear seats in church. When one deliberately selects a rear seat, he tells the congregation that as yet he doesn't feel at home with them (congregation's responsibility to welcome him so that he will want to move up to join them), or that he isn't particularly interested in what the minister has to say, or that he feels no responsibility for the service, at least not enough to move up front to join "them" in the participation. One exception to this should be pointed out; the church where the preacher preaches so loudly that one must sit as far away as possible for eardrum protection. (I remember two ministers for whose sermons I went armed with two small wads of ear cotton. It was inconvenient, but I wanted to hear what they had to say).

Isn't it poor strategy on the part of parents, who want their children to grow up devoted to the church, to permit them to develop the habit of sitting "on the outer fringe" of the group, as far away as they can be without being completely outside? Particularly, I have never been able to understand ministers (the ones in charge of the services) who allow their own family to sit in the rear seat—it simply is weird psychology it seems to me. If the sermon is of such caliber that the preacher's own offspring need sit no nearer than the most remote seat, is the sermon worth while to other people?

The disposition to sit in rear seats is a suspicious symptom. If you have developed that habit, why not stop and check your pulse?

Throw out the Life Line across the dark wave;
There is a brother whom some one should save;
Somebody's brother! oh, who, then, will dare
To throw out the Life Line, his perils to share?

Throw out the Life Line with hand quick and
strong;

Why do you tarry, why linger so long?
See! he is sinking; oh, hasten today—
And out with the Life Boat! away, then, away!

Throw out the Life Line to danger-fraught men,
Sinking in anguish where you've never been;
Winds of temptation and billows of woe
Will soon hurl them out where the dark waters
flow.

Soon will the season of rescue be o'er;
Soon will they drift to eternity's shore;
Haste then, my brother, no time for delay,
But throw out the Life Line and save them today.

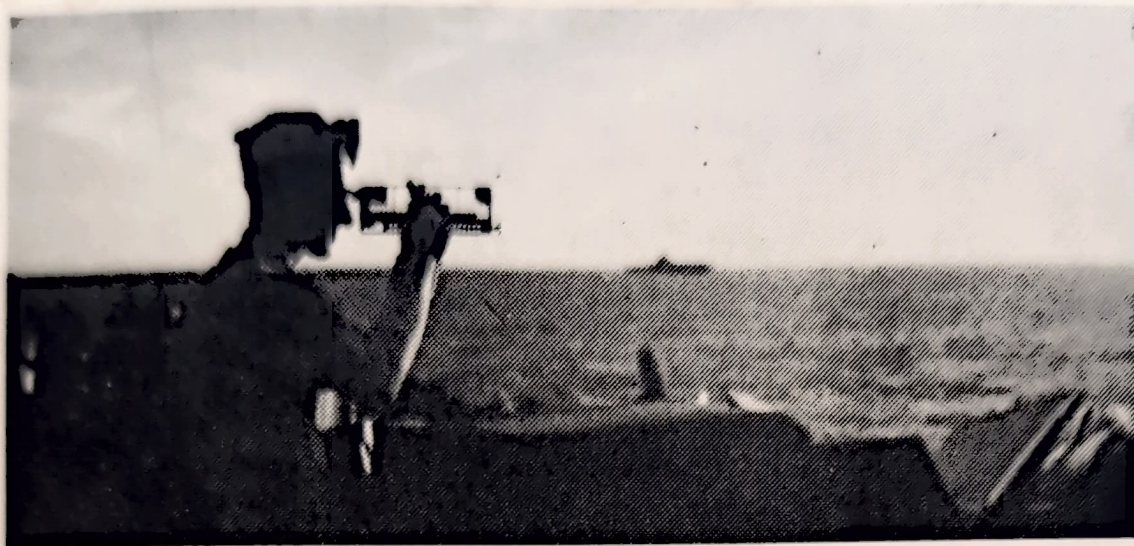
—Rev. Edward S. Ufford

Range and Bearing to the Guide

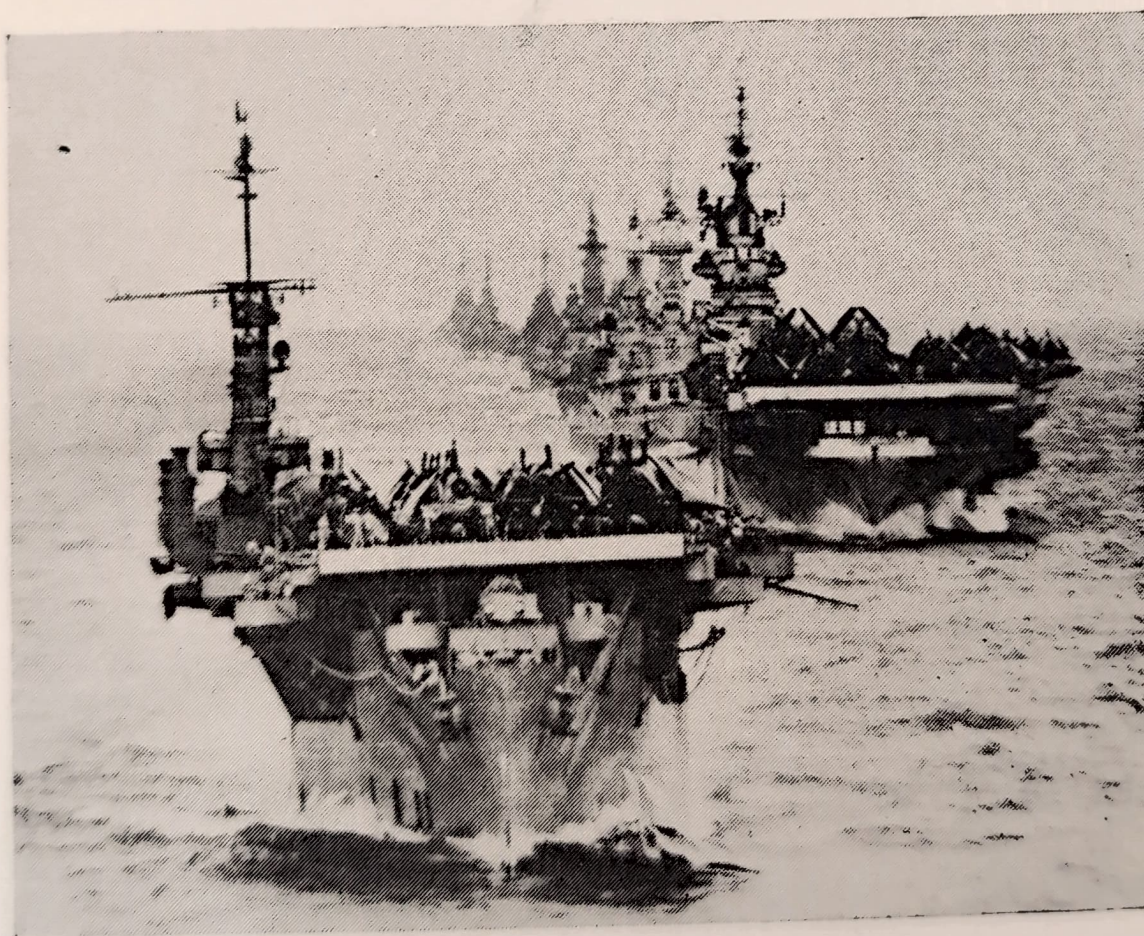
"What's the range and bearing to the guide?" This is a question heard frequently on the bridge of a ship cruising in formation with other vessels. In each group of ships one is designated "guide"; she usually is the flagship, the ship carrying the admiral in charge of the group. All other ships are assigned definite positions or stations in the formation. These stations are defined in terms of range (distance) and bearing (direction) from the guide.

It is imperative that each ship keep her station and not get out of place. The larger the group of ships, the more important it is that ships "keep station." For instance, some groups in Task Force 58 had over thirty members—carriers, battlewagons, cruisers, and destroyers—and when the formation was maneuvering at high speeds, a ship which could not keep station threatened adjacent vessels with collision.

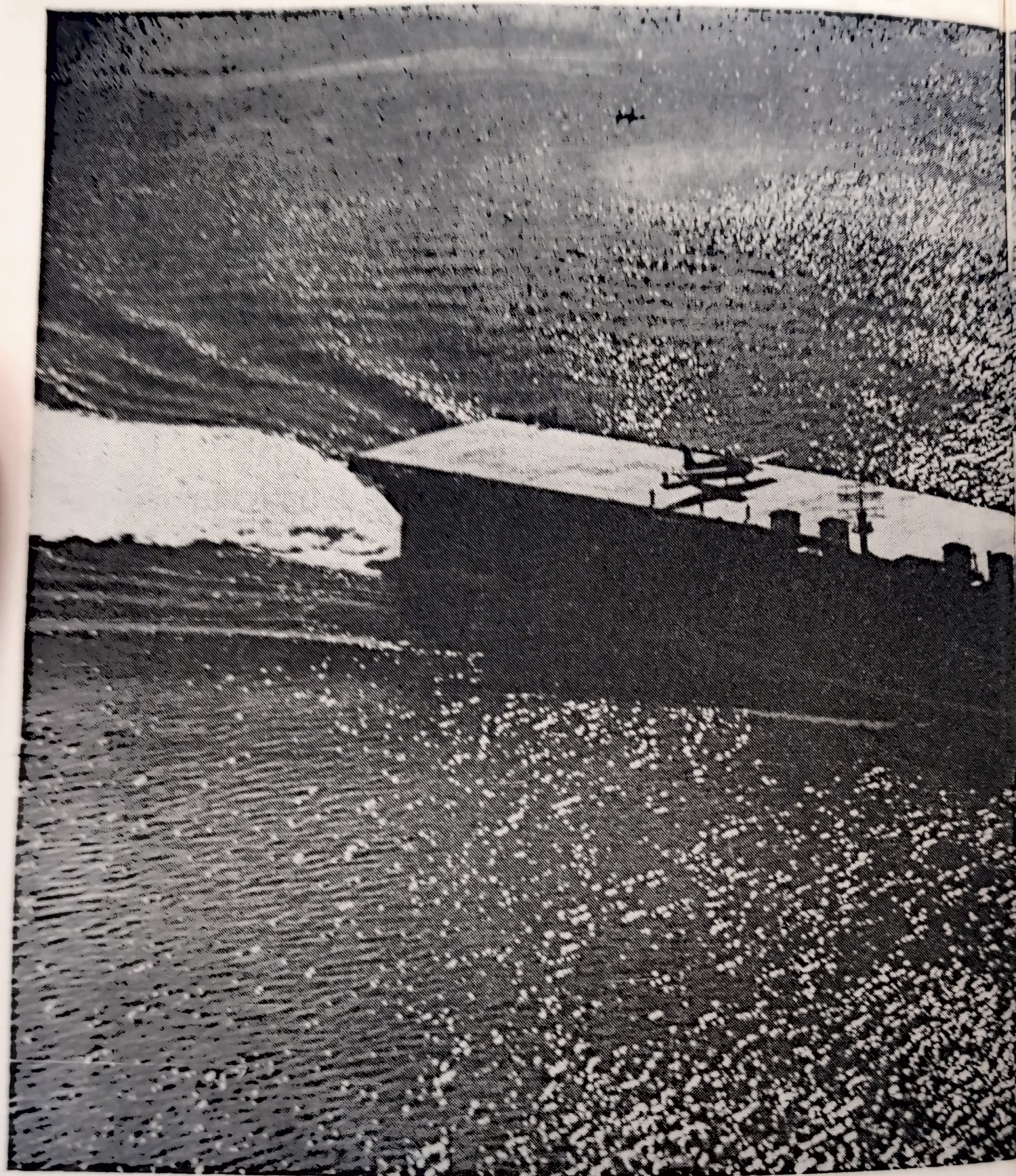
To keep station, each ship must adjust her course and speed to maintain her range and bearing. This involves constant checking with a stadimeter to determine range and with an alidade or "bearing circle" on a compass to determine



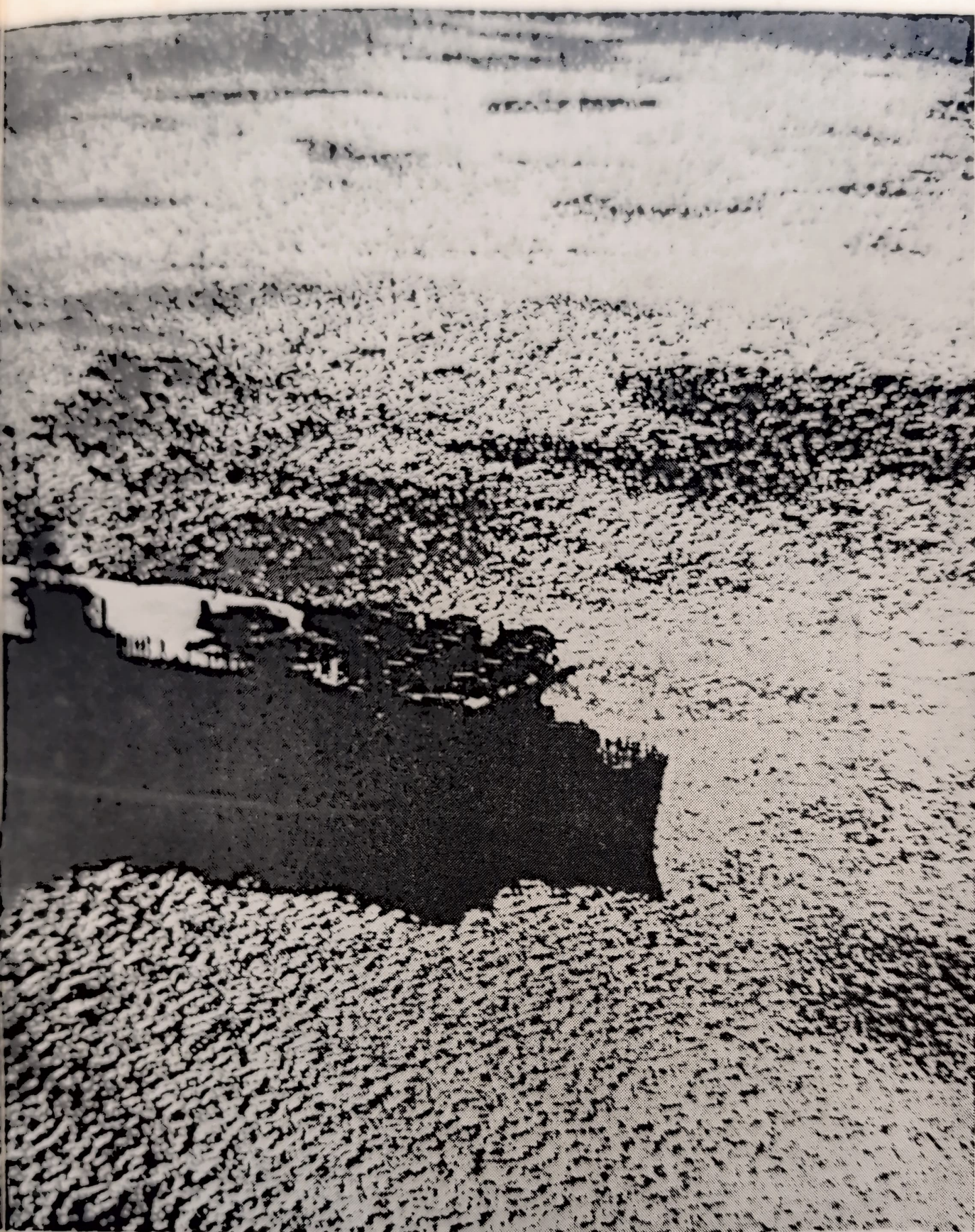
Official U. S. Navy Photograph
RANGE TO THE GUIDE



Official U. S. Navy Photograph
IN COLUMN OUT OF THE HARBOR



CARRIER



LANDING

Official U. S. Navy Photograph



Official U. S. Navy Photograph

ТУРНООН
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direction in relation to the guide. All ships have to pattern their courses and speeds after this guideship.

Many times I have stood on the bridge of our carrier with binoculars slung around my neck and have looked across at the guideship. And as I repeatedly checked our range and bearing, I thought of how life itself is like that. There is a guide for life. Jesus Christ says, "Follow me . . . I am the way . . ." One who follows Him, who steers his life according to the teachings of Jesus, one who day by day checks his range and bearing to this Guide—such a person will always be "in station."

It Does Make a Difference

"Formation course is 270, we're steering 270; formation speed is 18 knots, we're making 18 knots with 183 R. P. M. rung up. Formation axis is 020. *Alabama* is guide bearing 350 at 4700 yards. We're in station."

We were on the open bridge of our carrier. I was relieving him as officer of the deck and was listening to him as he gave me the information I needed before commencing my four-hour watch. After I had checked the range and bearing to the guide and found that we were "in station," he handed me the binoculars, and I took over the watch.

It wasn't long until we began closing in on the *Alabama*. I "took off" turns in order to slow down a little and then asked the helmsman to steer a degree to the left. We continued to close. I took off more turns and steered 267. Slowly we drifted back. Shortly before reaching station I rang up the normal R. P. M. (revolutions of the propellers per minute) and steered 270—the course on which the other ships were.

Immediately we began to drop behind the *Alabama*. We had to increase speed and steer

to the right—272. This enabled us to regain the distance we had lost. Just before gaining our assigned position, I resumed the ordered course and speed. But lo and behold, we again closed in on the guide!

For two hours we alternately closed in and fell behind the guide. I concentrated as diligently as I could on maintaining our assigned position. Never had I applied myself more carefully, yet never had I experienced so much difficulty in keeping station.

Finally, after we had wandered dangerously close to the *Dayton* and then the *Topeka*, I had one of our communicators call "the flag" (the task group commander in another ship) and ask who was designated guide. The answer came back—to my utter surprise—that the *Hornet* was guide!

I had been sincere in guiding on the *Alabama*. But I had been wrong. No matter how earnest and sincere I was, I was always out of position because I was guiding on a ship who herself was changing course and speed.

We hear occasionally, "It doesn't make any difference what religion one believes in so long as he is sincere." But it *does* make a difference. No matter how sincere we are, we will never be safe unless we guide on life's *true* Guide, Jesus Christ.

Eyes on the Guide

"Honeybee, please move ovah."

A southern drawl broke the silence of the night on our bridge as the short-range radio carried a transmission from another ship in the task group. Each ship had a nickname by which she was identified in radio calls, and "Honeybee" was the call-name for a destroyer. She had wandered out of station and was crowding another destroyer who asked her to "please move over."

Failure to keep station in one's assigned position in the cruising formation was both embarrassing and dangerous. A careless station-keeping ship was a threat to surrounding vessels. Since each craft's position was assigned in terms of distance and direction from the guideship, it followed that the entire formation could steam along in an orderly fashion only as each ship remained in proper relation to the guide.

In a task group of twenty to thirty ships, some were a substantial distance from the guide (from two to three miles) and were separated by intervening ships. Suppose these ships should suddenly decide to keep station on the nearest and most easily seen ships—keep a convenient dis-

tance from the vessels in the immediate vicinity, with the *Hornet* guiding on the *Bennington*; the *Alabama* on the *Wasp*; the *Miami* on the *Indiana*; and so on. Chaos would result as each craft began guiding on her neighbors. With as many guides as there were ships, only confusion could develop. Even the thought of such a situation is preposterous.

And yet similar confusion at times prevails in Christendom when we take our eyes off the Guide and begin keeping station on surrounding Christians. As good as the influence of some of them may be, we still are admonished to follow Jesus, not Paul or any other person. The danger is that we will begin guiding on somebody who gets out of station himself.

"Brother Jones does it. Why can't I?" But Christ didn't call us to follow Brother Jones; He said, "Follow *me*."

Another says, "I'll have nothing to do with the church. They are a bunch of self-righteous hypocrites." Such a person is guiding on minor ships. He has taken his eyes off the Guide, if indeed he ever had them on Him.

Somebody else says, "I'm going to quit the church. *They* don't appreciate me and what I have done. *They* talk about me. *They* have lost the vision. *They* ought to do this or that. If *they*

would live right, the Lord's work would progress." He, too, has his eyes on other ships.

Christ warned us about focusing our attention on surrounding vessels instead of on Him. At one time Simon Peter became concerned about the way another Christian was conducting himself and asked, "Lord, what shall this man do?" The Master admonished Him, "What is that to thee? follow thou me" (John 21:22).

What if other Christians act in a fashion contrary to our concepts? Shall we guide on them and wander out of station ourselves? Let us pray God to help us to keep our eyes fixed on Him, our Guide. And whatever others do, may we always be found in the place where He has assigned us—in our station.

Out on life's stormy ocean wildly the waves may
roll;
Loud is their fierce commotion, but One can the
pow'rs control.
Far from the peaceful harbor, doomed by the
waves to die,
Courage! behold thy Saviour to rescue—now
draweth nigh.

Loud the angry billows beat about my soul,
But they only drive me nearer to my goal.
What tho' the night be falling over the restless sea,
One never will forsake me, He safely will pilot me.

Raging waves obey Him, tempest gales have gone;
All is calm before Him, Christ, the mighty One.
Safe from the storms of sorrow, entered the haven
blest;
Peace for the troubled spirit, and realms of eternal
rest.

Tempest and storm must cease, when Jesus whis-
pers, "Peace";
Tempest and storm must cease, when Jesus whis-
pers, "Peace."

—Haldor Lillenas

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Alert Lookouts

"The lookouts are the eyes of the ship."

This is a frequently heard axiom spoken to stress the importance of men being alert when they are on lookout duty. Lookouts are continuously on the job at various stations around the ship. On a carrier, for instance, there is a man up in the mast, one on the bridge, and one at each corner of the flight deck. These are on duty for two hours and then off duty for six or eight hours. Two hours is the maximum length of a lookout watch because eyes tire easily.

The lookouts scan the sea and sky, ever watching for strange planes, approaching ships, objects floating in the water, and any unusual development. Many a ship has averted trouble because of alert lookouts.

How alert is your church? Is it alert in reaching new people? Does it make any effort to spread the gospel in unchurched communities? Does it advertise its services? Does it make visitors welcome and get to know them? Or is it a snug little group content in the weekly assembly of the same few members week after week to hear themselves pray and talk, compliment each

other, and have "a good time" among themselves?

What kind of a lookout are you? Are you alert in looking for opportunities to tell others what Christ means to you? Or doesn't He mean enough to give it a thought? Are you alert to notice methods of improving yourself? Are you alert enough to study and develop yourself? Or are you dozing at your post?

*Brightly beams our Father's mercy
From His lighthouse evermore;
But to us He gives the keeping
Of the lights along the shore.*

*Dark the night of sin has settled,
Loud the angry billows roar;
Eager eyes are watching, longing,
For the lights along the shore.*

*Trim your feeble lamp, my brother;
Some poor seaman tempest-tossed,
Trying now to make the harbor,
In the darkness may be lost.*

*Let the lower lights be burning,
Send a gleam across the wave!
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman
You may rescue, you may save.*

—P. P. Bliss

Vision Beyond Sight

In the spring and summer of 1945 the fast carrier task force spent some time cruising around east of Honshu and Hokkaido, the two northern Japanese islands. The weather was chilly and foggy—the coldest July I had ever experienced. I recall distinctly one of those foggy days when dawn found us two hundred fifty miles off shore and steaming northwest. Visibility was good. About nine o'clock we plunged into a mass of fog so dense that we could not see a single ship.

There were thirty-four vessels in that particular task group, which means that the possibilities of collision were almost infinite because no ship could see another. Yet the group steamed along at a normal speed and made several turns without a single ship approaching danger.

Why could all those ships maneuver safely in that fog? The reason—radar. Radar is an ingenious discovery which sees in the dark and can pierce the fog as effectively as a human eye can see in daylight. Each ship possessed radar equipment which revealed on a scope a small dot for every other ship in the vicinity. The arrangement of dots on the scope was exactly the same as the

arrangement of ships in the group. By observing the scope we could "see" where the guide was and keep our ship in correct position on her. Our normal senses alone were helpless. We would have been lost had we depended on them alone. Although few of us understood radar, we still had faith in it, operated by means of it, and carried on successfully.

There are many spiritual truths we cannot comprehend or explain. Indeed, there are many too deep and broad to enter our narrow slits of human reason. If we believe only what we can see and prove with human faculties, we will be lost in a fog. Although we do not understand, we can exercise faith—our spiritual radar. At times we have nothing else except that by which to operate; but in those times it will see us safely through the fog. Thank God for spiritual radar.

Typhoon

A typhoon is an awesome affair. It is impossible to paint with words an adequate picture of this terrible tempest of the sea. In October, 1944, our part of the fleet was lashed by the tail of one typhoon, and in June, 1945, we were caught in the "eye" of another one—both in the Philippine Sea. The terrific wind generated in these storms was over 100 knots (about 115 miles per hour), and in the June storm the wind was strong enough to turn the propellers of the planes lashed to our flight deck. The huge waves exceeded 70 feet and looked much higher. Ships seemed to leap high into the air and then plunge down deep into the angry sea. The screaming gale decapitated the volcanic waves to fill the air with spray. All men except those on the bridge were ordered below so none would be washed overboard. Riding through a typhoon is a frightful experience.

The storms of doubt can toss a soul in as awful a manner as a typhoon whips a ship. This is especially true for youth in their last two high school years, all of college, and immediately subsequent years. Not all young people are besieged with

such doubts, but many are—and the doubts are as real and as furious as the most frenzied typhoon. Distressed indeed is a young soul tossed with doubt. Perhaps right now you are suffering this turmoil of soul. You know what it is to have no rest. And there is no rest until Jesus comes. Then the Master who calmed the sea, the Master who said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," He calms the troubled waters of your soul. A calm sea spreads out where the typhoon lashed. He may delay His coming in order to test you, but don't give up—there's no typhoon which does not move on. Don't let your doubts swamp your craft. The tempest will pass.

*Master, the tempest is raging! The billows
are tossing high!*

*The sky is o'ershadowed with blackness; no
shelter or help is nigh.*

*Carest thou not that we perish? How canst
Thou lie asleep*

*When each moment so madly is threat'ning
a grave in the angry deep?*

*Master, with anguish of spirit I bow in my
grief today;*

*The depths of my sad heart are troubled; O
waken and save, I pray!*

*Torrents of sin and of anguish sweep o'er my
sinking soul!*

*And I perish! I perish, dear Master; O hasten
and take control!*

*"The winds and the waves shall obey My will.
Peace, be still! Peace, be still!"*

*Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea,
Or demons or men, or whatever it be,
No waters can swallow the ship where lies
The Master of ocean, and earth, and skies;*

"They all shall sweetly obey My will;

Peace, be still! Peace, be still!

They all shall sweetly obey My will;

Peace! Peace! Be still!"

—H. R. Palmer

Read Mark 4:35-41.

*Man the lifeboat! Man the lifeboat! Strong and
short above the roar*

*Sounds the order to the watchers on the tempest-
beaten shore.*

*Hark! again the guns appealing! Signals burn
for swift relief;*

*There are men and wives and children, facing
death, on yonder reef!*

*Man the lifeboat! Man the lifeboat! Fog and night
and cruel sea,*

*All the odds of death against them, and eternal
jeopardy.*

*Thou, who bidd'st us dare the surges, stay us at
the struggling oar!*

*Nay! go with us to the rescue! Shall they sink in
sight of shore?*

*Man the lifeboat! Man the lifeboat! Think how
once on breaking deck*

*Thou didst stand aghast, till Jesus brought thee
from the lurching wreck.*

*To the oars then! O Redeemer, let Thy heart
throb thro' our hand,*

*Till the souls in mortal danger, find thro' Thee
the solid land.*

—M. Woolsey Stryker

"The Mighty I"

Ships of the fleet frequently receive nicknames comprised of an appropriate adjective and the ship's initial. "The Big E," "The Mighty T," and "The Big T" are examples.

During the war on one of our infrequent visits to port we happened to tie up near another large warship whose name began with "I." Her record was not good; she had not proved herself to be a potent vessel; she commanded little respect among men from other ships. Among them she was referred to by various uncomplimentary appellations.

One day when a group of our men were ashore, they overheard another bunch of sailors bragging about their wonderful ship. When our fellows asked what ship they were from they were told, "The Mighty I." Our men laughed. It wasn't long until the phrase "The Mighty I" got around as a joke.

That phrase has come to mind many times. It is appropriate to many individuals. Notorious on our carrier was a young officer who came aboard as the nation's prime contribution to the war effort. He knew more about ship handling, navi-

gation, gunnery, navy history, and almost everything than anybody except the captain. It was evident that it wouldn't be long until he could teach even the skipper a few things. Among his shipmates he was quickly tagged "Little Admiral," for it was obvious that in his opinion he was "The Mighty I."

Do we ever suffer from the vain delusion that we are the most important members of the church, that its success is due primarily to us, that we are the most outstanding members of our school, that we are the most essential players on our ball team, that we are the most acceptable ministers in the conference, that we are too good for our circle—that nobody really appreciates how important we are?

When you deliver speeches or teach classes is the "first person singular" conspicuous? In your writings have you endeavored to delete "I" as often as possible? Do you attempt to keep the public informed of your successes and the honors which you receive? In your church circles do you attempt to publicize your liberal offerings—or do you attempt to give "in secret"?

Can it be said of any of us that he considers himself to be "The Mighty I"? Or, when considering our achievements, is our *honest* attitude "Not I, but Christ working through me"?

On Getting Along

The crew of the 40-millimeter gun was engaged in firing practice. The gun barrels recoiled and rebounded as the guns fired away. An ear-splitting din filled the air, and smoke poured out as the guns followed the target across the sky.

A smoothly functioning gun crew is a model of co-operation and precision. On our mount there were twenty-two men functioning as a team—pointer, trainer, loaders, and ammunition passers. What impressed me was that several of these men were not very friendly with each other. They had frequent disputes, arguments, and points of contention. Yet when it came to the matter of the gun crew's functioning, they suppressed their differences and kept the ammunition moving.

Since churches are composed of human beings, their members never will agree on everything. There always will be a variance of opinions, and because of personality differences some people just will not get along with others. Yet if church members, like that gun crew, would subordinate their petty whims and differences to the good of the church, its progress would leap forward.

If church members with their personality quirks and idiosyncrasies were gracious enough to overlook each others' peculiarities and infirmities, if they were thoughtful enough and saintly enough to look beneath these to the heart of gold frequently to be found there, if, like that gun crew, they would unite wholeheartedly on the task set by the Master, how the interests of the Kingdom would prosper!

*While o'er the deep Thy servants sail,
Send Thou, O Lord, the prosperous gale;
And on their hearts where'er they go,
O let Thy heavenly breezes blow.*

*If life's wide ocean smile or roar,
Still guide them to the heavenly shore;
And grant their dust in Christ may sleep,
Abroad, at home, or in the deep.*

—G. Burgess

A Sense of Pride

The sun was boiling down on the sandy beaches of Ulithi. The fleet was at anchor in the lagoon, resting after a long business cruise and preparing for the next one. Hundreds of men on liberty were swarming the beaches, seeking shade beneath coconut palms or playing ball on cleared areas. Suddenly a commotion began stirring in one corner of the recreation area—obviously a free-for-all fight which spread like heat rash. Soon the entire place was in a turmoil. Most of the fellows were warmed up by beer which was available in cans. Initial fisticuffs were precipitated when some sailors from a certain carrier disputed a boisterous claim by *Enterprise* men that "The Big E" was the best ship in the fleet. As the fist-swinging spread, it engulfed men who had no idea about the original point of discussion. Each pugilist started swinging at anybody and everybody to prove that *his* ship was the best.

Unique to the Navy is this sense of pride which a sailor has in his ship. There may be things about her which he dislikes and which irritate him no end. He may not get along with some of the crew members. But when a sailor is ashore he

will defend to the limit the honor of *his* ship. Resorting to fisticuffs is not meritorious, but the sense of pride is.

What kind of a sense of pride do you have in your church? When you are out away from her, do you defend her name? Do you stick up for her? Or—just because there are some things about her of which you disapprove, or some members with whom you do not agree—do you join her critics in ridiculing her?

We men on the *Belleau Wood* recognized that our ship wasn't the only ship helping to win the war, but to us she was the best. Do you have an equal pride in your church to say, "My church isn't the only church in God's Kingdom, but to me she is the best"?

Passing the Word

“Boatswain’s Mate! Pass the word that there will be a meeting of all police petty officers in the chow hall immediately.”

The boatswain’s mate-of-the-watch is one of the men on watch on the bridge (or quarterdeck if the ship is in port). He is the one who, at the order of the officer of the deck, passes the word over the public address system whenever the ship is to be informed of anything, whether it is chow, general quarters, mail call, or an announcement. In the Navy the clause “pass the word” has come to mean anything from announcing to advertising and informing.

There are a lot of churches which need a good course in “passing the word.” They don’t advertise their services; they don’t exert any influence on the communities; their cities scarcely know they exist.

I once attended a church where, on a weeknight, a national figure in that denomination came to speak. No announcement was made of his coming, and the small attendance indicated that only a few had heard about the meeting. That church needed some refreshing on how to “pass the

word." The church has the Word of life. Shall we not pass the Word to those in our community as well as to those across the sea.

A close friend of mine was hastening by automobile across country and was in Michigan when Sunday rolled around. He delayed long enough in one of that state's cereal cities to attend church. He looked in the phone book for his denomination's church or parsonage. He found nothing. In vain he looked under all possible headings and classifications. Failing to find anything, he attended another denomination. There is a large church of his choice in that city—and it, too, needs a course in passing the word.

What kind of a job are you and your church doing of passing the word?

An Encouraging Word

He was a green officer of the deck and had stood only a few of the "top" watches. (This is nicknamed "top" watch because the OOD is the officer on watch in charge of the ship.) On that particular afternoon the captain was in his sea cabin on the deck below the open bridge where the officer of the deck was on duty. Suddenly the task group received an order to make a change in the cruising formation which required considerable maneuvering by all ships except the guideship to gain their new stations. The captain let the young OOD on the bridge do the entire maneuver by himself (making necessary changes in courses and speed) but kept an eye out the air port of his sea cabin to make sure everything was satisfactory.

At the conclusion of the formation change the skipper went up to the bridge and quietly told the OOD, "That was a good job on that formation change, son." Only a few words, but they were words of encouragement which solidified that young man's confidence.

An encouraging word costs so little yet means so much to the one receiving it.

How long has it been since you deliberately gave an encouraging word to somebody? In particular—the persons about whom you may have made disparaging remarks are possibly carrying burdens of unusual discouragement and difficulty, burdens which could be lightened considerably by one encouraging word from *you*.

*There's a call comes ringing o'er the restless wave,
"Send the light! Send the light!"
There are souls to rescue, there are souls to save.
Send the light! Send the light!*

*Send the light! The blessed gospel light;
Let it shine from shore to shore!
Send the light! and let its radiant beams
Light the world forevermore.*

—Charles H. Gabriel

Mail Call

The happiest moment in life at sea came at "mail call" when the bugler blew the colorful notes of that call and the boatswain's mate passed the word over the public address system, "All division mail petty officers lay below to the post office to draw your division's mail."

In port we heard "mail call" every day, but during long cruises at sea we heard it only once or twice a week—whenever we fueled from a tanker which had come out to us with fuel and mail. At such times the bugle's blast brought cheers throughout the ship.

It was mail from home that we wanted, letters and snapshots from the ones we loved, assurance from them that they were still there loving us and praying for us. Mail call was encouragement, proving that they cared. Only one who has been at sea can appreciate the stimulus received at "mail call." But the boys who heard that call yet received no mail suffered a dejection which is indescribable.

There is a definite way in which you can cheer another person with a "mail call." It is by writing a letter of appreciation—to somebody to whom

you are not obligated to write and from whom you expect nothing in return. For instance, write a note to your district superintendent to tell him you have noticed the good work he is doing. Drop a paragraph or two to that grade school, high school, or college teacher who went out of his way to contribute to your life. If your pastor is giving his best to the church, write him a postcard to thank him. Launch an airmail letter to some of our missionaries. They are on foreign soil longer than we service men were, and they anticipate "mail call" as eagerly as we did. Or write a note to some person who holds no official position but who, by his conduct, has been an inspiration to you.

As a boy I attended our conference camp meeting every year. A perennial and traditional figure on the campground was a short, stocky, friendly businessman from Indianapolis. He was a leader and a solid character, admired by all of us young fellows. Then the years began to roll by more rapidly, and they took me far away from former associates. Almost a decade had passed since my last contact with that grand old man of the campground when, one day in our church paper, I noticed that he was seriously ill. It took me only a few moments to dash off a note saying I was sorry he was ill, that I hoped he would get well,

and that the memory of him on the campground was one of my choicest. In a few days he passed away. Several months later I received a definite thrill when his daughter said that one of the joys of her father's last days was that letter of mine and that tears flowed down his cheeks as it was read to him.

Try to sound "mail call" for somebody today.

*Roll on, thou mighty ocean! And, as thy billows
flow,*

*Bear messengers of mercy to ev'ry land below.
Arise, ye gales, and waft them safe to the destined
shore;*

*That man may sit in darkness and death's black
shade no more.*

*O Thou eternal Ruler, who holdest in Thine arm
The tempests of the ocean, protect them from all
harm!*

*Thy presence, Lord, be with them, wherever they
may be;*

*Tho' far from us who love them, still let them be
with Thee.*

—James Edmeston

In the Darkest Night of the Year

It was one of those rare nights at sea when the moon was around on the other side of the earth and the sky was jet black. For some reason a cloud condition had curtained the stars—they had all gone out. From the bridge of our carrier I gazed out over the flight deck, felt the wind in my face, and tried to see the dividing line between black sea and black sky. It wasn't there. There was no distinction. It was black above and black around wherever one looked. I thought of those lines of John Newman, "The night is dark, and I am far from home." I was far from home, too—about 7,000 miles.

I thought of the spiritual darkness in which the soul can find itself when the nights of discouragement and doubt move in, those dark nights of oppressive and hopeless doubts which only honest young souls can experience. But then my soul looked up as I thought of those four lines from Washington Gladden's "Ultima Veritas":

*"In the darkest night of the year
When the stars have all gone out,
Courage is better than fear;
Faith is truer than doubt."*

"What Are You Reading, John?"

I was home on a short ten-day leave and had dropped into his office for a friendly chat. He was my college Y. M. C. A. secretary who had contributed much to my character growth during college days. After we had discussed some of my experiences in the Navy and recent events on his campus, he turned to me and asked point blank, "What are you reading, John?"

I knew what he meant. He did not mean to ask if I read the newspaper, *Time* magazine, or such like. Rather, he was interested to know if I was reading any good books that had enduring value. I knew he meant that because he always had meant that; he always had been that way. Through the years he was constantly stimulating us fellows to do good reading—reading of books which had contributed something to our lives, books which had made us better men. The average young person needs external stimulation to do such reading; the tendency is to do no reading at all, or if any, a cheap, easy-to-read brand of triviality. The man looking at me was so concerned about good reading that each Christmas he gave as presents to young men—books.

I always appreciated that man and the prodding he gave me to do high-level reading.

Do you ever read the Bible? A good biography? A good history? Are you currently reading anything constructive? Lift your eyes from this page and ask yourself, "What am I reading these days?" Satisfied with the answer?

A Good Griper

Wherever one went in the Navy he was certain to find disgruntled men. They were dissatisfied with their duty—if they were ashore, they were anxious to get sea duty; if afloat, they were anxious to get shore duty; if in Alaska, they wanted to be transferred to the tropics; if they were in the tropics they wanted “anyplace else,” even Alaska; men at sea thought Pearl Harbor was paradise, but men at Pearl Harbor were straining at the leash to get out. There were few who didn’t complain about their duty; all were looking for “orders” to somewhere else. Frequent complaints referred also to the chow, the quarters, superiors, and to almost everything. Navy terminology for “complaining” was “gripping,” and few indeed were those who didn’t develop the habit. There was enough gripping going on around that it required definite effort to keep out of the rut. Nobody kept out entirely.

Civilian life is stained in many places with the same complaining spirit. In particular, there are two phases of church life in which that spirit of complaining criticism is poisonous—church services, and fellow members.

When I was a very young boy my father took me to Greenville, Illinois, to hear a noted preacher. I didn't understand much of what he said, but I was impressed by his earnest and kind spirit. Somehow, listening to him made me want to be a better boy. At the close of the service we were invited to dinner at the home of a friend. Another guest was a woman who also had heard the sermon. Conversation naturally centered about the preacher's discourse. I shall never forget hearing her say in a sharp, unkind, and "know-it-all" critical tone, "Well, I'd like to tell that preacher a thing or two about sanctification." (I didn't know what the word meant, but I knew she was irked about something.) She continued with several criticisms of the preacher, and she made them in a harsh spirit. The effect on me wasn't to change my opinion of him, rather it lowered my opinion of her.

Constructive criticism offered to the people who can benefit by it, and offered in a kind manner is helpful. But complaining criticism spoken about their services does nobody any good.

How much complaining do you do about the song service, the sermon, the praise service, the Sunday school, your young people's group? If they are unsatisfactory, why don't you go to the people responsible and offer your help to improve them.

How much praying does the average complaining criticizer do? Does he pray for the services as much as he "gripes" about them? Probably not. Do I pray for the correction of defects in my church as much as I complain about them? Probably not.

Perhaps Christian work is hindered more by griping members than by opposing "sinners."

Appropriate in this connection are the words of Alexander von Humboldt, one of the fathers of modern geography. "It is far from my practice to find fault with endeavors, in which I have not myself made any efforts, because their success so far appears very doubtful."*

No matter what group of people we circulate in—school, office, factory, business, church—there will be always those who do some things we do not like. In your church you may not like the preacher, the song leader, the Sunday-school superintendent, your class teacher. In particular you may not like the way they overlook your potential contributions. Or for some other reason you may feel like criticizing. Whenever you feel like criticizing other church members consider these five points:

1. Corrections and improvements must be

*Hartshorne, Richard—*The Nature of Geography*, Page 27.

made, perhaps as suggested by you, but how about the spirit in which you offer your criticism?

2. Take your criticism directly to the person involved; talk to him not *about* him.

3. The most unkind and hurtful things said about Christians are said not by "the world" but by fellow Christians (e.g., start a discussion about a minor debatable tradition in almost any denomination, and then listen to the conversation).

4. When you criticize a third person, you lower yourself in your listener's opinion, for he is certain to think to himself, "If you will gossip to me about somebody else, what assurance have I that you will not gossip to somebody else about me?"

5. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Jesus is recorded as saying this in John 13:35. Unkind criticism convinces nobody that the speaker is a disciple.

One thing I appreciate about my parents is that while I was a child they never once criticized our church or its members in my presence. To be sure there were many things of which they did not approve, things which they felt should be corrected. But I never heard them berate the church or those in it. After I matured and was able to discuss the issues involved, they allowed

me to participate, but when I was young, they never once fouled my mind by complaining or criticizing. Many parents grieve to see their children grow up and turn a cold shoulder to their church. In many cases these same children lost their admiration for their church because they heard it criticized so much by their parents.

Do you impress other people as being a criticizer? What kind of a "griper" would you make in the Navy?

There was a grumbling sailor who griped the
whole year long.

What wasn't was the "ought to be"; what was was
always wrong.

He didn't like his duty, and he made it plain to see
That anywhere he wasn't was the place he'd
rather be.

They sent him o'er the ocean with his seabag and
and his sack.

No sooner had he landed than he wished that he
were back.

He couldn't stand the tropics with the hot sun
blazing down;

He couldn't stand the arctics where the cold and
winds abound.

At last death's final transfer moved him on to
realms afar.

He drew a post in Heaven where the perfect
quarters are.

But hardly was he seated when he passed around
the word

If Saint Peter could arrange it, he would like to be
transferred.

(Adapted from Sgt. Cos in Camp Callen
Rangefinder)

Confidence in the Final Victory

For the final three years of the war in the Pacific, as we doggedly pushed the foe back from the Gilbert and the Marshall Islands to the doors of the Empire, there was a definite underlying feeling of absolute confidence in the final victory. This confidence was not apparent in the first year following the tragic episodes at Pearl Harbor and the Philippines, and the enemy's rapid surge eastward across the Pacific. Numerically inferior American forces fought courageously when the outlook was dark. They turned the tide at the Battle of Midway in 1942, and from then on the sense of confidence increased.

During subsequent battles there were severe losses and temporary setbacks, but nothing ever shook this solid confidence which seldom was mentioned out loud but which each man nevertheless felt was definite—this confidence in our final victory.

At times such as these, we in Christendom are sad at conditions around us—international and interracial hatred, crime, lust, deceit, falsehood, and juvenile delinquency. The success of the forces of sin can make one quake. Do you ever

feel that this fight against sin is a hopeless task, that the forces of righteousness are on the losing side? Take heart. The final score will not be written by the cohorts of evil. God still controls the levers of this world and universe. If you're on His side, you're on the winning side. Keep living for Christ to the best of your ability, and have confidence in the final victory.

*Far across the waters, over life's deep sea
God has sent a beacon, and its light we see.
Through His Son, our Saviour, God has sent
this light
For His love will lead us as a beacon bright.
To His harbor guiding, if we seek His ray,
Through life's stormy waters God will show
the way.*

—Mattie B. Shannon

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"Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me"

New experiences make some hymns "live" in our hearts in a way they never did when they were merely known in our minds. One hymn that always had appealed to me was "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me." I liked the words. I liked the melody. But after spending a good number of months at sea I now find that hymn vibrant within me in a way it never was before.

Many a time on the bridge of our ship I gazed out over the sea and hummed

*"Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea."*

As we approached islands and harbors with narrow channels I recalled

*"Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rocks and treacherous shoal...."*

A natural sentiment when watching a compass or studying a chart was

*"Chart and compass came from Thee;
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me."*

The experience of riding out a couple of typhoons helped one appreciate the lines,

*"As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
Boisterous waves obey Thy will
When Thou sayest to them 'Be still!' "*

I like those passages in the New Testament revealing Christ's attraction to the water, His interest in fishermen, the time He spent by the sea, and His cruises on it. My adoring prayer of importunity is

*"Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me."*

*In fancy I stood by the shore, one day,
Of the beautiful murm'ring sea;
I saw the great crowds as they thronged the way
Of the Stranger of Galilee;
I saw how the man who was blind from birth
In a moment was made to see;
The lame was made whole by the matchless skill
Of the Stranger of Galilee.*

*And I felt I could love Him forever,
So gracious and tender was He!
I claimed Him that day as my Saviour,
This Stranger of Galilee.*

*I heard Him speak peace to the angry waves,
Of that turbulent, raging sea;
And lo! at His word were the waters stilled,
This Stranger of Galilee.
A peaceful, a quiet, a holy calm
Now and ever abides with me;
He holdeth my life in His mighty hands,
This Stranger of Galilee.*

*Come, ye who are driven and tempest tossed,
And His gracious salvation see;
He'll quiet life's storms with His "Peace, be still!"
This Stranger of Galilee;
He bids me to go and the story tell
What He ever to you will be,
If only you let Him with you abide,
This Stranger of Galilee!*

*Oh, my friend, won't you love Him forever,
So gracious and tender is He!
Accept Him today as your Saviour,
This Stranger of Galilee.*

—Mrs. C. H. Morris

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Read Matthew 4: 18-22

Matthew 15: 29

Mark 2: 13

Mark 4: 35-41.

Mark 14: 24-36

Luke 5: 1-11

War Is a Stupid Thing

During the war we were taught to hate the Japanese. We saw cartoons depicting them as a ratty-looking monkey type of creatures with buck teeth and bad eyes. They weren't humans as we.

In September 1945 I walked down the streets of Tokyo and Yokohama just a few days after the war's end. I mingled among those people, saw how their homes had been destroyed, how they had suffered. I talked with them and learned how they had been deceived completely as to what the war had been about and what actually had transpired during the battles. I saw that they were people just like us except for a slightly different colored skin; they loved their homes, their parents, their families. I thought to myself, "Here you folks have suffered, we have suffered—and what is the point of all this war anyhow? War is a stupid thing."

God, help us human beings down here on this earth where Thou hast put us to keep from making a mess of things again. Help us see that we are all sons of Thine. God, keep us from stumbling into another war.

The Haven of Rest

To appreciate fully the sentiment in H. L. Gil-mour's poem, "The Haven of Rest," one should have the experience of being on a ship fighting her way through a turbulent sea. The sheltered waters of a harbor are indeed a haven to a vessel which has been buffeted and battered by storms on the ocean. A sailor cannot ride out a voyage across the stormy north Atlantic or experience a nautical joust with a screaming typhoon in the southwest Pacific without sensing a sharp increase in his appreciation for the protection which a harbor affords.

The significance of a haven of rest is even greater to men of the sea who have sailed the waters exposed not only to the dangers of the natural elements but also to the threat of enemy attack: the submariners who headed their submarines out of friendly harbors to plow *alone* through enemy waters; the men of the merchant marine who manned the freighters and tankers on the dangerous "Murmansk Run" across the north Atlantic, continually exposed to enemy air attack and submarine attack; and the men in the Navy's surface fleet which often came to blows with

enemy units, especially with enemy aircraft.

During the war in the Pacific the Navy's fast-carrier task force waged an offensive which consisted of one foray after another deep into enemy seas where planes from the carriers delivered a sustained attack against enemy airfields, airplane manufacturing plants, harbors, shipping facilities, and industries. Between each foray the ships returned to a friendly harbor (usually a large atoll lagoon such as at Majuro, Eniwetok, or Ulithi) for replenishments, repairs, and a brief rest before steaming out on another lunge at the foe. On each cruise into the danger area we had to maintain constant alertness and were under continual apprehension until each mission had been accomplished. This accomplishment sometimes required several weeks during which time the force never was safe. But then the orders always came to return to port. The ships steamed back toward safety. We relaxed somewhat and breathed more easily—we were heading for shelter. It felt good after being in the danger zone to file through the channels of our harbor entrance and anchor in a "haven of rest."

My soul in sad exile was out on life's sea,
So burdened with sin and distressed,
Till I heard a sweet voice saying, "Make me
your choice,"
And I entered the "Haven of Rest."

Oh, come to the Saviour, He patiently waits
To save by His power divine;
Come, anchor your soul in the "Haven of
Rest,"
And say, "My Beloved is mine."

I've anchored my soul in the "Haven of Rest,"
I'll sail the wide seas no more;
The tempest may sweep o'er the wild stormy
deep;
In Jesus I'm safe evermore.

—H. L. Gilmour

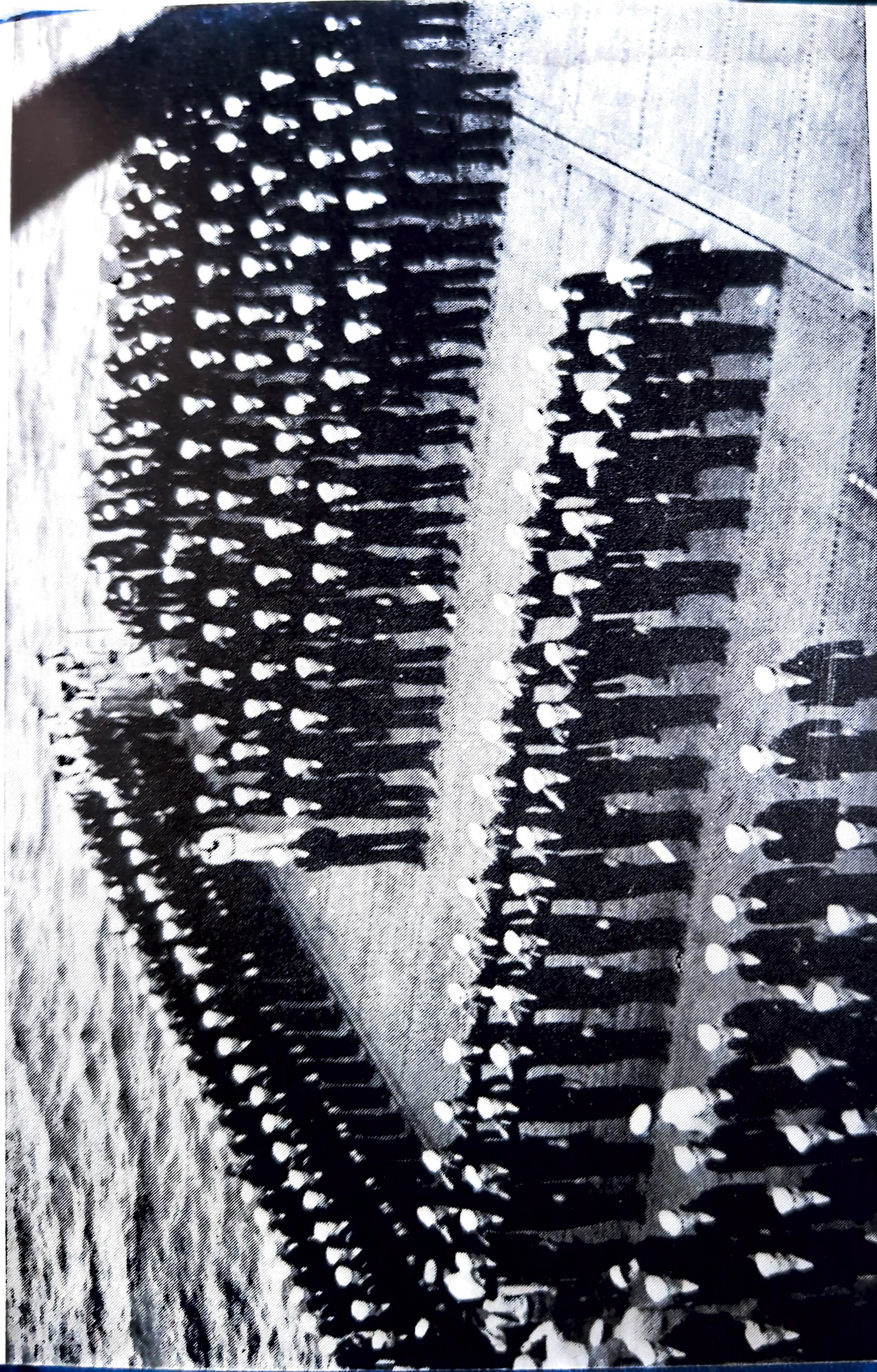
Our Fellowship

There was a small group of men on the *Bellows Wood* who met each evening after general quarters for a half hour of prayer and meditation. We usually met in one of the "repair lockers" which provided sufficient room and privacy. Here we sat in a room whose bulkheads were draped with all kinds of repair gear and fire-fighting mechanisms—rope, blocks and tackles, shoring stock, and breathing apparatus. We sat on wooden plugs about ten inches high and eight inches in diameter.

On Friday nights we met for Bible study in the ship's little library back in the fantail (the stern or rear end of a ship) down on the third deck. When the ship's speed exceeded sixteen knots the stern vibrated so much that hearing another person speak was difficult.

Only a dozen men participated in this Christian fellowship, but it was a priceless inspiration to those few. Every single one of us, as we recall those days at sea, cherishes the memory of that fellowship group.

Now there was one striking lesson we all learned from that experience: differences be-



Official U. S. Navy Photograph

"STAND BY FOR INSPECTION"
(Page 144)



"I'VE ANCHORED MY SOUL
(page

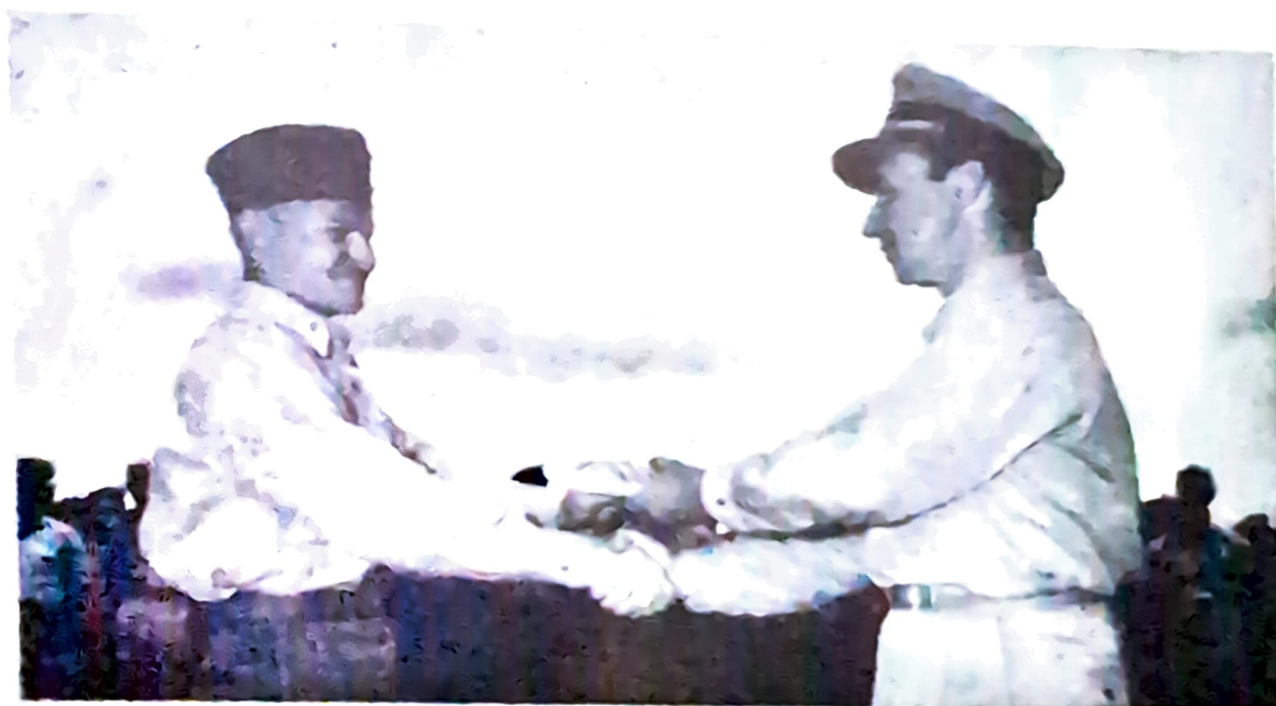


IN THE HAVEN OF REST"
133)

Official U. S. Navy Photograph



Official U. S. Navy Photograph
COMING HOME



Official U. S. Navy Photograph

"WELL DONE"
(page 149)

tween denominations are trivialities. On the ship there were only a few Christians who prayed daily and studied God's Word. When those few got together, denominational creeds were ignored—they had to be in order for any kind of a group to survive. Attention was focused on those ties which bound us together—the things which unite followers of Christ—rather than on the little things which divided us.

The helpful association we experienced made us wish that our churches in the States would co-operate similarly to share the fundamentals of the faith and pull together in fighting sin. But instead, each denomination is secure in its own traditions. Christ condemned this business of giving to man-made traditions priority over the fundamental values of the faith, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Paul vigorously opposed traditionalism where it received precedence over basic Christian values; he opposed so strongly the Mosaic tradition (the law) that he suffered more from a religious denomination (the Jewish followers of that tradition) than he did from the heathen.

Christians deny themselves a genuine blessing when they give priority to precious nonessentials, which *divide* Christendom, and place them above

the deep truths of the Kingdom which Christ intended should *unite* His followers. The seventeenth chapter of John records Jesus as praying "that they all may be one." On the ship we found that oneness possible and profitable.

*"Join hands then, brothers in the faith,
Whate'er your [denomination] may be.
Who serves my Father as a son
Is surely kin to me."*

"They Found the Church There"

U. S. forces fighting their way across the Pacific from one island to another discovered that a path had been cleared before them. On island after island they received a warm welcome from Christian natives whose conversion from cannibalism was a landmark on the trail blazed by missionaries long years before. These missionaries had built up a tremendous reservoir of good will among the peoples to whom they had gone. As a result the natives were hostile to the conquering Japanese but friendly to the Americans when they supplanted the Japanese soldiers.

A fascinating story of this missionary trail blazing is "They Found the Church There," written by Henry P. Van Dusen and published by Charles Scribner's Sons in New York. It tells of countless experiences of allied military men being rescued and befriended by natives who a few decades earlier would have devoured them.

It is significant that no one denomination had a monopoly on this trail blazing. Out there the denominations were all units of one great front moving forward as a single unit. Why can't it be so here in the homeland?

My Good Thoughts Book

After the war had ended, our carrier was assigned to "magic carpet" duty—transporting returning servicemen to the States. All airplanes were removed, and the hangar was stripped. In it was rigged a forest of steel bunks in tiers five high. We could carry a few thousand passengers.

We passed the word among the passengers about our daily fellowship group which met for hymnfests, Bible study, and prayer. Many of the passengers responded by joining us. In the two-week cruise across the Pacific we came to know each other pretty well.

To our last meeting of one cruise—the night before we docked in San Diego—several boys brought autograph and address books to get the names of friends in the group. One of these passengers was a colored boy, a "seabee." I observed with interest his approach to a man who was a member of our crew. The latter noticed that the book in which his name was wanted had several poems and articles pasted in it. In surprise he asked, "Why, you don't want my name in here, do you? This is your scrapbook!"

"Yes, I do too," replied the boy. "This is my

'Good Thoughts Book.' When I see a poem or story that gives me a good thought, I cut it out and paste it in here. Now when I see your name written in it, I will have a good thought from it too."

The name and address were quickly inscribed.

When people who know you think of your name, do they have a "good thought"?

*We have heard the joyful sound: Jesus saves!
Jesus saves!*

*Spread the tidings all around: Jesus saves!
saves!*

*Bear the news to ev'ry land, climb the steep and
cross the waves:*

*Onward! 'tis our Lord's command; Jesus saves!
Jesus saves!*

*Waft it on the rolling tide: Jesus saves! Jesus
saves!*

*Tell to sinners far and wide: Jesus saves! Jesus
saves!*

*Sing, ye islands of the sea; echo back, ye ocean
caves;*

*Earth shall keep her jubilee: Jesus saves! Jesus
saves!*

—Priscilla J. Owens

Rig for Church

January 13, 1946

Dear folks:

It is a few minutes after 2000 (eight p.m.) out here in the Marianas where the *Belleau Wood* is riding at anchor a few hundred yards off the western shore of Saipan. It's a warm January evening, too. A balmy breeze is blowing through the air ports—feels just like summertime. As I glance out those portholes I can see the lights of Saipan's military bases twinkling in the darkness.

Today is Sunday. This morning the chaplain conducted the regular divine service; today it was on the forward elevator at hangar deck level, underneath the open sky. But there are no services on Sunday evenings; instead, a large screen is rigged on that same forward elevator where at this moment a large crowd is attending the movie.

In over two years of overseas duty I still am not accustomed to have Sunday evenings roll around and not spend them in church. Of course I miss my home church in morning worship, but the chaplain's service helps meet the need then. But Sunday evenings devoid of church "just don't seem right" to a boy who, through several years, has formed the habit of spending the closing hours

of each Sabbath in "hymn-sing," young people's meeting, and evening worship. With each passing year I am increasingly thankful that you parents directed me in forming that habit.

This January Sabbath, however, has been different. In this week's mail I received a transcription of our church's national weekly broadcast. (I think the original must have gone out over the air at least a month ago.) Tonight at 1900 when our little group assembled in the "repair locker" for the regular period of prayer, I asked them if they would like to attend church this evening. At first they grinned, with question marks in their eyes, thinking that perhaps I had gone nutty. Then I told them what I had in mind.

It was not a large congregation—just a handful of men squatting on the steel deck around a turntable and speaker which had been "rigged for church" in my stateroom. It was not a large congregation, but that broadcast never was heard by a more interested and appreciative group of listeners. We enjoyed hearing the hymns and words of inspiration. It wasn't difficult to imagine that I actually was participating in a Sunday evening service in the States. This has been my best Sabbath evening in the Pacific.

Oceans of love,
John

Stand by for Inspection

The shrill notes of the boatswain's pipe sounded throughout the ship, and the voice of the boatswain's mate came over the public address system, "All divisions stand by for inspection." This is the universal signal on ships in the Navy for all men to get ready for inspection. Each man goes to his designated place, the area assigned to him for cleaning. It may be a passageway, an office, a compartment, a gun mount, the bridge, or any other place on the ship. As the inspecting party moves through the vessel they make a check on everything—cleanliness, preservation of material, stowage, upkeep, and so forth. All defects are noted, and the man responsible for the space is notified in order that the unsatisfactory conditions will be corrected—to improve the appearance and operation of the ship. This is known as a "material inspection."

Another type of inspection is the "personal inspection" for which all men assemble in ranks to be viewed by the commanding officer, or occasionally by a visiting admiral. The inspecting party proceeds up and down, in front of and behind each rank, observing each individual and no-

ting the haircut, cleanliness and press of uniform, shoeshine, posture, and general appearance of every man.

I recall the words of a famous young man of years ago who *requested* an inspection. He asked the Great Inspector to examine his soul, to cleanse his mind, to point out their flaws, to show him the way of improving his life:

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart:
Try me, and know my thoughts:
And see if there be any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting"*

(Psalm 139:23, 24).

This is the most important inspection of all.

A Trim Ship

The average sailor takes pride in a clean ship—outside and inside. While cruising at sea a ship's exterior gets dirty, especially along the water line where the paint is battered off by the water rushing by. There the steel becomes tinged with rust, and an accumulation of "seaweed" adds a foul green color. Sometimes an oil leak causes ugly streaks down the side of the hull. Water draining out through the many drains and scuppers pours down the ship's side producing unsightly strips of rust and dirt.

While a ship is at sea, there is not much that can be done to improve her outside appearance; but as soon as she comes to anchor in a harbor or ties up alongside a dock, the sailors go "over the side" to scrape off the rust and dirt and give her a new paint job. This is called "side-cleaning" and is hard work.

The inside of a ship is easier to keep continuously clean. Three times a day the word is passed over the public address system, "Sweepers, man your brooms. Give her a clean sweepdown fore and aft." The men assigned to sweeping duty start pushing their brooms. Decks are

swabbed daily, bulkheads are washed, brass is polished, and countless other jobs are accomplished to maintain the ship's appearance.

There are some churches where the members take as much interest in maintaining the church's appearance as sailors do their ship's. The church lawn is neatly grassed and trimmed, there is attractive shrubbery or flowers around it, the building is clean and neatly painted, the door (especially the front one) fits snugly on its hinges and is clean, the bulletin board in front is smartly lettered and attractive. On the inside the walls are clean, hymnbooks are in good condition and carefully placed in the racks.

There are other churches which are different. The lawn looks like a public playground; the building is shabby; the bulletin board is spotted with rusty letters sometimes still announcing last Sunday's services. On the inside the walls are often streaked or smudged with dirt; many hymnbooks are battered and torn and carelessly stowed in the racks; and announcements on the inside bulletin board are carelessly lettered and awkwardly posted. The church has a shoddy appearance, something like a battered ship riding at anchor with nobody doing anything about it. It commands the respect of no one.

How trim is your church?

Fitness Reports

An appraisal of the performance of every man in the Navy is submitted periodically by his superiors. These appraisals take the form of "fitness reports" in which the man's performance is evaluated in many respects—seamanship, gunnery, leadership, dependability, initiative, discipline, execution of orders, and so forth. The Navy Department in Washington has a record of each man in the Navy, a record of the kind of service he has rendered and the way he has performed his duty.

It is interesting to notice in the Old Testament the final "fitness reports" entered on the record for the Hebrew kings. In the two books of I Kings and II Kings each ruler's name appears with a somewhat detailed biography and narrative of his reign—his accomplishments, battles, and failures. And then at the end there appears a final summarizing sentence of his reign, a culminating fitness report which concludes tersely, "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord," or if his record had been on the "plus" side of the final balancing, "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord."

I often wonder what kind of a fitness report

God keeps for each of us. It will be satisfying when we report back to Him at the conclusion of our duty down here on earth to know that our fitness report up there contains good entries. It will be satisfying then to hear the Great Captain say as He looks over our fitness report, "Well Done."

*Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide,
Oh, receive my soul at last!*

—Charles Wesley

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

It is safely moored, 'twill the storm withstand,
For 'tis well secured by the Saviour's hand;
And the cables, passed from His heart to mine,
Can defy the blast thro' strength divine.

It will firmly hold in the straits of fear,
When the breakers have told the reef is near;
Tho' the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,
Not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow.

When our eyes behold thro' the gath'ring night
The city of gold, our harbor bright,
We shall anchor fast on the heav'nly shore,
With the storms all past forevermore.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.
—Priscilla J. Owens

"No G. Q. This Morning!"

It has been a year since the last Kamikaze was shot down in the vicinity of our ship. It has been a year since the battle gong rang for general quarters (battle stations). Every day of the war that gong rang an hour before sunrise and again at sunset, sending us to one full hour of routine G.Q. It frequently rang for additional and unscheduled sessions.

A year has passed since those days in the combat area, and yet their memory remains strong—so strong, in fact, that early the other morning I dreamed I heard that gong again. As I automatically roused myself to get out of bed, I gained consciousness sufficiently to tell myself, "No, it isn't true." But I had just heard it! And yet—there was the open window overlooking the lawn, and there was no rumble of hundreds of men running to battle stations! I was in two different worlds and didn't know which was real. And then I did awaken. A mockingbird was chirping outside. I didn't have to go to general quarters after all. "O God, I'm glad," I gasped. Fervently I told Him, "God, I'm glad I don't have to go to G.Q. Thanks for peace." I was so thankful I

almost cried. To awaken amid peaceful surroundings, to the singing of a mockingbird instead of the roaring of guns—what cause for thanksgiving!

Have you *recently* thanked God for peace and that you can awaken normally without the clanging of a gong summoning you to battle stations? Have you *ever* thanked God that you can awaken without having to go to G.Q.?

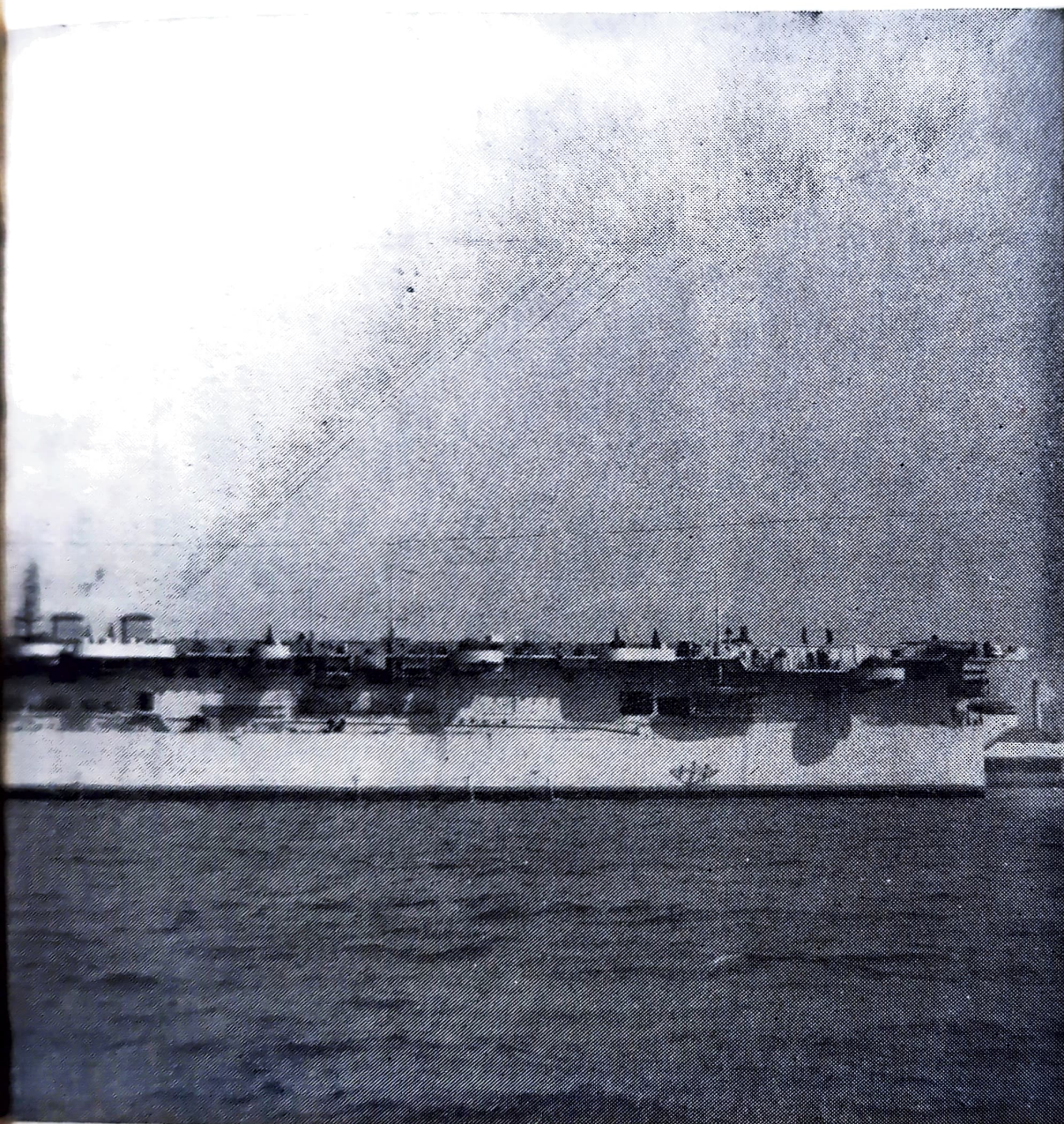


Official U. S. Navy Photograph

"STAND BY TO LAUNCH AIRCRAFT"



A TRIM
(page



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Official U. S. Navy Photograph



Official U. S. Navy Photograph

THE NAVY HYMN

The Navy Hymn

There is no better way to conclude this series of "Thoughts from the Sea" than to present the words of the Navy Hymn. This hymn has been sung for years at all bluejacket training stations, at the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, at advanced bases on distant shores, and on ships at sea. Every Sabbath we sang it on our carrier; sometimes we were in port and sang it at the conclusion of worship services held on the forward elevator, which had been lowered to the hangar deck level. Since we were in the tropics, there was a bright sunny sky canopy over the elevator opening in the flight deck above us. But when we were at sea, there were planes on the hangar deck, and the elevator frequently was in use. Then the worship services were held down on the second deck in the main messing compartment, where the crew ate their meals. This was located above the engine rooms, and we could hear the dull throbbing and feel the vibration of the big engines as well as hear the constant purr of ventilation blowers forcing fresh air down through the ship's ventilation ducts. At such times the steel bulkheads, steel deck, and steel overhead

beams provided the setting for church. The Navy Hymn took on special meaning in such surroundings when we were steaming toward the battle zone and didn't know what was ahead.

Imagine that you are standing in our carrier's messing compartment with a group of us sailors and officers; the ship is heading for trouble; the chaplain has just concluded the morning message; we are singing the Navy Hymn:

*"Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm doth bind the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep,
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.*

*"O Saviour, whose almighty word
The winds and waves submissive heard,
Who walked'st on the foaming deep
And calm amidst its rage did sleep,
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.*

**"Lord, guard and guide the men who fly
Through the great spaces of the sky,
Be with them traversing the air
Through darkening cloud and sunshine fair.
O hear us when we lift our prayer
For those in peril in the air.**

**"O Trinity of love and power,
Our brethren shield in danger's hour.
From rock and tempest, fire and foe
Protect them whereso'er they go.
Thus let there ever rise to Thee
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.
"Amen."**

I am the way, the truth, and the life.
John 14:6

**Come unto me, all ye that labour and
are heavy laden, and I will give you
rest.**
Matthew 11:28

**Him that cometh unto me I will in
no wise cast out.**
John 6:37

It may be that among those who have read this book there is someone who never heard that a Pilot is available to guide him through life. It may be that there are those who never knew that theirs is the privilege of acquiring the aid of Jesus in piloting them. If you are one of these individuals, let me assure you that He is ready, willing, and anxious to pilot you if you will let Him. His offer is extended to you as well as to everyone else. Will you accept Him as your Pilot right now?

May I suggest that you read what He Himself said about His offer to you and your acceptance of it? You can read this in the first four books of the New Testament. These will acquaint you with Him, and in them you will find your sailing orders telling how to serve Him.

There may be others who have read these pages and who know that the Pilot is available, but who have never thought seriously about utilizing His help. They know about Him, but they do not know Him. They are cognizant of His offer, but are drifting along on their own, thinking that they can get along just as well without Him. If you are one of these, I recommend that you also read the first four books of the New Testament. (The rest of the New Testament and much of the Old Testa-

ment are helpful in explaining things about Him, but only those first four books contain what He Himself said.) Get better acquainted with Him. I feel certain that if you really know Him you will not be content to sail without Him.

Perhaps some of my readers know about this Pilot but have definitely rejected Him. If you are in this group I urgently request you to reconsider. Review carefully what is to be gained by linking yourself to Him in contrast to what is to be lost by separating yourself from Him.

It is possible that there is a fourth group of readers who once were sailing along with this Pilot and were following His orders but have subsequently "jumped the ship" and deserted. If you are a deserter, I desperately plead with you to return to Him before you crack up on the rocks.

My hope is that the great majority of you who have sailed through these pages belong to a fifth group—those who know the Pilot, who heard Him call, who answered that call and are now faithfully serving Him as their Pilot through life.

This is a parting invitation to those of you in the first four groups to join us in singing:

"Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,

Hiding rock and treacherous shoal;
Chart and compass came from Thee;
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

“As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
Boisterous waves obey Thy will
When Thou sayest to them, ‘Be still!’
Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.”

Bon voyage,
and
Carry On!

